HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL

MEMOIRS

OF

PIUS THE SIXTH.

BRITISH MUSEUM

HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL

MEMOIRS

OF

PIUS THE SIXTH,

AND OF

HIS PONTIFICATE,

DOWN TO THE PERIOD OF HIS RETIREMENT INTO TUSCANY;

CONTAINING

CURIOUS AND INTERESTING PARTICULARS,

DERIVED FROM THE

MOST AUTHENTIC SOURCES OF INFORMATION,

CONCERNING

HIS PRIVATE LIFE,

HIS DISPUTES WITH THE DIFFERENT POWERS OF EUROPE,

THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO

THE SUBVERSION OF THE PAPAL THRONE—AND

THE ROMAN REVOLUTION.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

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THE

AUTHOR's PREFACE.

IT is not always the great qualities, the illuſtrious exploits, or the flagrant crimes of a ſovereign, that render his reign an epoch important in hiſtory. It is ſufficient that he ſhould have been the co-operator in important events, or the conſpicuous victim of ſome dreadful calamity; that around him, in his name, in a word, at his very expence, there ſhould have happened ſome of thoſe circumſtances which leave deep impreſſions upon the memory of mankind.

By theſe different titles, the pontificate of Pius VI., of which he is already diſpoſſeſſed, deſerves to be preſented to public attention, with a few explanations.

It is not his hiſtory, however, that we engage to write; we wiſh only to offer materials for it, arranged upon a philoſophic plan. What period, in fact, is more worthy of the attention of the philoſopher than that in which the impoſing fabric of temporal and ſpiritual power, ſurrounded by every thing that ſeemed to enſure its ſtability, is on a ſudden ſhaken down, as if by one of thoſe miracles which ſuperſtition might have thought its principal

ſupport;

ſupport; when the ſceptre and the cenſer are ſeen broken by the ſame blow, the pontiff hurled from his chair, the ſovereign from his throne; his Levites and his courtiers, the members of his ſpiritual retinue, and thoſe of his temporal council, plundered, impriſoned and diſperſed; thus, by the moſt dreadful cataſtrophe, expiating a long ſeries of errors conſolidated by ten centuries, a long abuſe of human credulity, of pretenſions, the inſolence of which excited nothing but the ſmile of contempt; in ſhort, a conduct emanating, in theſe latter times, from the blindeſt phrenſy, and ſuch as was beſt adapted to accelerate its overthrow, even had it been dictated by the enemies of the Holy See?

How can this ſudden fall have been effected without violent ſhocks, and almoſt without bloodſhed? What combination of events has then prepared, what immediate cauſes have led to a reſult which makes one part of Europe tremble, and ſtrikes the other with ſtupefaction? This we ſhall endeavour to develop in the following picture of the pontificate of Pius VI. We ſhall abſtain from declamation, which we leave to intolerance, as it is only a mark of animoſity, and renders all narratives ſuſpicious. In our opinion, ſound reaſon ſhould employ, towards a fallen and unfortunate enemy, neither abuſe nor inſulting diſdain. We wiſh to juſtify the title we have aſſumed, and prove ourſelves Hiſtorians and Philoſophers.

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HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL

MEMOIRS OF PIUS VI.

AND OF

HIS PONTIFICATE.

CHAPTER I.

End of the Pontificate of CLEMENT XIV.—*Proceedings of the Sacred College.*

ON the demiſe of the fanatical Rezzonico, Ganganelli had, in 1769, been ſeated upon the papal throne, through the influence of the courts of Madrid and Verſailles. They had expelled the Jeſuits from their dominions; but the meaſure remained incomplete as long as that too famous ſociety ſtill exiſted in the other catholic countries, and, eſpecially, as long as it was acknowledged and protected by the Holy See. Clement XIII. had converted ſome of its members into powerful and dangerous inſtruments, that had well nigh occaſioned a ſchiſm in the church, and embroiled all Europe; or, rather, the Jeſuits had made of the pontiff, who was a man more weak than wicked, the blind inſtrument of their fanaticiſm and ambition. It was in agitation to lay the axe to the trunk of that immenſe tree, which threw its baleful ſhadow over a great part of the Chriſtian world, and of which the widely-ſpreading roots extended even under the pontifical chair. Cardinal Ganganelli appeared to have juſtly appreciated this dangerous ſociety. His ſound judgment had not been impaired by his abode in a cloiſter, nor by the honours of the Roman purple. He was prudent and conciliating; and ſeemed to unite two qualities ſeldom found together, courage and moderation.

deration. The family of Bourbon was in hopes of obtaining from him the entire deſtruction of the Jeſuits. Their miniſters had indeed made it a tacit condition of his elevation to the papal throne, particularly the Spaniſh ambaſſador, Don Joſeph Monino, afterwards created count of Florida Blanca. Of an active and perſevering diſpoſition he earneſtly endeavoured to remove Ganganelli's doubts, to combat his ſcruples, and to quiet his alarms. He had long to ſtruggle againſt the endleſs intrigues of the party which he wiſhed to ſubdue, and which had numerous and powerful adherents, particularly at Rome. At length, on the 21ſt of July, 1773, he obtained, or rather extorted, the famous bull, *motu proprio*, which pronounced the extinction of the ſociety of Jeſuits. At the moment of ſigning it, Clement XIV. ſtill heſitated, and ſaid, as with a foreknowledge of his fate, *I know very well that I am about to ſign my death-warrant; but no matter: the die is caſt.*

From that day, fatal to him as well as to the Jeſuits, Ganganelli lived a prey to every kind of anguiſh. The fanatics endeavoured to excite the people to revolt; and threats were held out of an attempt upon his life. His health viſibly declined: reaſſured, however, by the miniſters of the two crowns, his courage occaſionally revived; and in the month of April, 1774, he announced to the Conſiſtory, for the following year, the jubilee, which ſince the time of Sixtus V. had been regularly celebrated four times in a century. The celebration of it was reſerved for another, Clement XIV. departing this life on the 22d of September following. His death did not excite the public regret to which he had ſo many claims. The Jeſuits and their partiſans had the inſolence to celebrate it as a triumph; the people, who appeared to behold it with unconcern, accuſed him of having ſuffered himſelf to be deceived by his ſecret adviſers; while the majority of the cardinals ſtill reſented his ſigning of the bull, and complained, almoſt without exception, that he had withheld from them every mark of confidence.

A report was ſoon ſpread that poiſon had put an end to his days. Though prudently contradicted by the phyſicians who had attended him during his illneſs, it gained credit from the indiſcretion of the ſurgeons, who made no ſcruple of declaring that his body had fallen to pieces as ſoon as deprived of life. Now that the facts, ſheltered from the

paſſions

paſſions which diſtorted them, are more eaſily aſcertained, it appears inconteſtable that poiſon was really adminiſtered to Ganganelli. The cardinal de Bernis entertained no doubt of it, as more than one foreigner, who knew him at Rome, can teſtify. Gorani, on the contrary, maintains that Clement XIV. died in conſequence of the terror with which he was ſtruck, after having ſigned what he called *his death-warrant.* He muſt, however, permit us to prefer to his teſtimony that of individuals who were about Ganganelli's perſon, even to the laſt moments of his life, and who could have no motive for the invention of an atrocious crime. The enemies of Clement XIV. had, on the contrary, ſtrong reaſons to deny a fact, which rendered him intereſting, by holding him up as a victim ſacrificed to the fury of party; and it appears, that it is from that ſuſpicious ſource that Gorani has drawn his notions concerning Ganganelli. He calls in queſtion the authenticity of the letters which were publiſhed in his name; and pretends that they could never be the productions of a man who was imbued indeed with theological ideas, but whoſe information upon all other ſubjects was very much confined. We think we can venture to aſſert, that in this reſpect Gorani is deceived. Thoſe who were intimately acquainted with Ganganelli, and among them this ſame cardinal de Bernis, who was an excellent judge of men and things, have often affirmed that they have ſeen the originals of the letters publiſhed by Caraccioli; and that it was eaſy to recogniſe in them the principles profeſſed by the pope, his philoſophical ideas, and his very manner of expreſſing them. However this may be, ſome time before his death, the moment of which more than one cardinal could, perhaps, have predicted to a certainty, the Sacred College, animated by a ſpirit, which moſt aſſuredly was not the Holy Ghoſt, buſied itſelf in intrigues, in order to ſeat a pontiff more favourable to its views upon the papal throne. The great majority was compoſed of thoſe *zelanti*, or zealous prieſts, who will be ſeen in the ſequel of this work playing a principal part during the pontificate of Pius VI. Taken in the maſs, they formed the party oppoſed to that of the two crowns; but there were among them a great many gradations of character. Some, and it was the ſmaller number, were *zealous* from a blind fanaticiſm, which was capable of leading them into the greateſt exceſſes: others from a cold conviction, pro-

ductive of obſtinacy, but not of religious rage: the greater part were *zelanti* from intereſt and pride. They ſtood forth as the ſtrenuous defenders of eccleſiaſtical immunities, becauſe they partook of the power and ſplendor thence accruing to the Holy See; and becauſe the maintenance of thoſe immunities brought into the apoſtolic coffers treaſures which compoſed a part of their patrimony. It would have required no common effort of philoſophy to rid them of their attachment to maxims which inſured them homage, power, and gold. Was it in the Sacred College, even at the end of the eighteenth century, that philoſophy could hope to find an aſylum?

It contained then, at the death of Ganganelli, furious *zelanti*, ſuch as the Rezzonicos, and the Torrigianis; and moderate *zelanti*, ſuch as the Albanis and the Colonnas. Some of them were acceſſible to reaſon, others to fear, and almoſt all were more or leſs attached to the Jeſuits. How indeed could it be otherwiſe? The Jeſuits were the moſt ſtrenuous ſupporters, the moſt artful apologiſts, and the moſt devoted ſervants of the Holy See. Deprived of their ſupport, it reſembled a deſpot after the diſbanding of his prætorian guards. They may be ſaid indeed to have been the nobility of the papal monarchy. It was a truth confuſedly felt every where; a truth which the illuſtrious Monteſquieu had been the firſt clearly to expreſs; and which experience has ſince evidently demonſtrated, that there was no monarchy without its *nobleſſe*. We have accordingly ſeen, that after the abolition of the order of Jeſus the papal authority perceptibly declined; and it is, perhaps, ſtill more to that cauſe, than to the progreſs of knowledge, that we may attribute its rapid and eaſy overthrow.

This was well underſtood by the *zelanti*, and the numerous party of which they were the chiefs. It was not, however, that they all entertained a wiſh to reſuſcitate the defunct ſociety. All were fond of its maxims, and the boſoms of all retained a mixed ſentiment of regret and hope. But there were ſome, who, prudent from timidity, and moderate from their natural diſpoſition, would have been frightened at the violent means that muſt neceſſarily have been employed to reſtore all at once to the Holy See its moſt effective ſupport; at the ſtruggles that would have taken place between the pope and the temporal ſovereigns; and

and at the calamities that would thence have reſulted to the church. They wiſhed to leave to time, to reflection, and to the gradual abatement of the rancorous paſſions, the care of bringing about the deſired revolution; permitting themſelves only to accelerate the moment of it by ſecret intrigues, and by all thoſe artful manœuvres which prieſts, and Italian prieſts eſpecially, ſo well knew how to employ.

It was among theſe *minor canons* of the *zelanti*, if the expreſſion may be allowed, that cardinal Braſchi took his ſeat. Hitherto he had not been ſufficiently important to excite in any party either ſentiments of ſtrong affection, or of inſurmountable diſlike. He was a man of ſenſe; poſſeſſed information of a certain kind; and, in his office of treaſurer of the Apoſtolical Chamber, had proved himſelf not altogether deſtitute of talents. His face was remarkably fine, and his perſon commanding; external advantages, which, though not always ſerviceable to their poſſeſſor, are never prejudicial—ſuch were his claims to attention. He was the pupil of Benedict XIV.: this furniſhed a favourable preſumption of his prudence. He had been inveſted with the purple by Clement XIII. the laſt of the fanatical popes: this was a reaſon for his not appearing formidable to the *zelanti*, and even for his allowing them ſtill to retain their hopes.

The reader will not be ſorry to be made acquainted with the judgment formed of him, when there was as yet no appearance of his being elevated to the papal throne, by a perſon equally diveſted of odious prejudices, and blind partiality; a man not leſs eſtimable on account of his moderation and ſagacity, than remarkable for the brilliant qualities of his mind: in ſaying this, we ſufficiently indicate the cardinal de Bernis.

This judgment will beſides have the merit of comprifing a ſummary of the life of Pius VI. till his exaltation, as well as that of enabling us to compare his pontificate with the opinion that had been previouſly formed of his character.

"John Angelo Braſchi was born at Ceſena, on the 27th of December, 1717. The favours of Benedict XIV. opened to him the road to preferment. Having employed M. Braſchi in the management of certain affairs, he rewarded him with a canonry of St. Peter's, by means of which he procured himſelf a place in the prelature. Clement XIII. afterwards

terwards appointed him auditor of the *Camerlingo**, and ſhortly after treaſurer of the Apoſtolical Chamber †. Although his talents are generally admitted, people have not been wanting to attribute ſo rapid a fortune to the favour of the Jeſuits, to whom it was even ſaid that he had been too complaiſant. It appears that the preſent pope ‡, after having beſtowed upon him a cardinal's hat, has not continued to ſhew him the ſame marks of confidence as before his promotion; a change, upon which the enemies of the cardinal have not failed to put an unfavourable conſtruction. No one can deny that he is poſſeſſed of a great deal of activity, and of conſiderable knowledge of a variety of kinds. Whatever may be the motive that has for ſome time reduced his credit to the mere reſpect due to the rank he occupies, it is not ſuppoſed that he is of a diſpoſition long to remain quiet in that neglected ſtate. He has ſufficient ſagacity to find opportunities of rendering himſelf neceſſary; or at leaſt to procure himſelf a certain degree of conſideration. It is true, that his reputation of being too enterpriſing will always be very prejudicial to him. He is, however, a man whoſe influence in a conclave is not to be deſpiſed."

This brief notice of the life and character of Pius VI. before his promotion to the pontificate, is worthy of remark in more reſpects than one. It proves, that nothing at that time announced him as likely to be thought of for the papal dignity; and that one of the moſt powerful cardinals felt for him neither a deciſive averſion nor regard. It proves, above all, that before he was ſeated in St. Peter's chair, he was but imperfectly known. In this portrait, drawn by an impartial and enlightened hand, we ſcarcely find a trace of any of thoſe defects which have by turns devoted him to ridicule and hatred, and of which we are about to ſee the developement in the picture of his pontificate. So true it is, that the good and bad qualities of moſt men are called forth, if not created, by circumſtances; or, rather, that what is a ſlight

* The place of *Camerlingo* was one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed at the court of Rome, but it was merely honorary, and almoſt a ſinecure. The cardinal *Camerlingo* was nominally the chief ſurveyor of ſtreets and fountains, and put his ſignature at the bottom of all public acts relative to the finances. He was conſidered as the principal miniſter of the Apoſtolical Chamber; but the real miniſter of the finances was the treaſurer.

† We ſhall hereafter explain the nature of the Apoſtolical Chamber.

‡ Clement XIV. was then alive.

a ſlight defect in one ſituation becomes a ſerious miſchief in another.

Nothing then at the death of Clement XIV. announced that cardinal Braſchi could become his ſucceſſor. The miniſters of the two crowns were only ſenſible, that it would be impoſſible for them to make a choice exactly conformable to their wiſhes. They had it in their power to dictate the excluſion of a few candidates only; but they were afraid of being too laviſh of that violent remedy. Among the cardidals, whoſe elevation they would have deſired, ſome, like Stoppani, who in the laſt conclave had been the principal competitor of Ganganelli, were verging upon decrepitude; others, like Conti and Simoni, although endowed with talents, and profeſſing moderate principles, did not inſpire complete confidence; while others, ſuch as Malvezzi, Negroni, and Zelada, who were diſtinguiſhed by their abilities and the wiſdom of their opinions, had manifeſted their obſequiouſneſs to the two courts, and their averſion to the Jeſuits, too ſtrongly, not to be excluded by a great majority of the Sacred College. Almoſt all the others were either deſtitute of capacity, or very ſuſpicious on account of the views they were ſuppoſed to entertain.

CHAPTER II.

Details concerning the Conclave of 1774.

WE have juſt ſeen what was the ſtate of parties when the conclave opened on the 5th of October, 1774.

From that very day the faction of the *zelanti* endeavoured to carry, as by aſſault, the election of one of its faithful adherents, cardinal Colonna Pamphili. He was not, by a great deal, the moſt furious of the party: had he been ſo, the *zelanti* would never have dared to propoſe him; but they thought him proper to ſecond their views under cover of his apparent moderation. He was not one of thoſe whoſe formal excluſion the miniſters of the two crowns would have inſiſted upon: but they were averſe to his pretenſions: they wiſhed, beſides, to gain the time neceſſary to ſtrengthen their party by the arrival of ſeveral cardinals, who were expected from France, Spain, Portugal, and the reſt of Italy. This was exactly what the *zelanti* dreaded. The cardinal de Bernis and Don Joſeph Monino were obliged, more than once, to aſſume a very energetic tone, in order to reſtrain their impatience; while the court of Liſbon, where the imperious Pombal ſtill domineered, ſpoke to them upon the ſubject in threatening terms.

Thus was the conclave, from the firſt moment of its opening, the ſeat of cabals: every day a new plot was laid, diſcovered, and defeated. Under the maſk of decency and reſpect, and while the different parties hypocritically invoked the aſſiſtance of the Divine Spirit, the moſt worldly perfidy was reciprocally and profuſely put in practice. "Nothing "can be more impoſing," ſaid a perſon who was eye-witneſs to theſe intrigues, to his correſpondent, "nothing can "preſent a more edifying exterior than the regularity, the "piety, and the apparent moderation of the Sacred Col-"lege; but I can ſay with truth, that under this ſacred veil "every honeſt man muſt grieve to ſee ſo much falſehood, "ſtratagem, equivocation, and deceit. Here all the paſ-"ſions are united and concentrated; and, in the preſent "circumſtances, derive additional ſtrength from the re-

"vengeful

" vengeful fury of the Jeſuits' party, and from the diſcon-
" tent that prevailed during the laſt pontificate."

The Sacred College, however, while granting to the miniſters of the two crowns the reſpite upon which they ſo ſtrongly inſiſted, made repeated trials of its ſtrength, and often counted the votes of the different parties. Every day there was at leaſt one ballot, which had no other reſult than a very ſmall majority in favour of ſome of the cardinals. In theſe *coups d' eſſai* Mark Anthony Colonna obtained the greateſt number of ſuffrages. He was enlightened, virtuous even to auſterity, but attached to the Jeſuits, and conſequently could not be agreeable to the catholic courts. On the other hand, he enjoyed too much conſideration, and was of too illuſtrious a family for the prevailing faction to think ſeriouſly of making him pope. He ſerved then, properly ſpeaking, to trifle away time. This game was played for ſeveral months, during which Braſchi never obtained more than a ſingle vote, and even that was at diſtant intervals; nor did cardinal de Bernis, nor the miniſter of Spain, yet foreſee in favour of whom the majority would definitively unite. Braſchi was beginning only to gain countenance among the partiſans of the Jeſuits, without whoſe ſupport he felt that it would be impoſſible for him to attain the papacy. He perceived no ſigns of his being perſonally diſagreeable to the two crowns; he had even been living for a long time paſt in a kind of intimacy with their miniſters; and it is not unlikely that he now began to entertain ſome faint hope of ſucceſs.

While in expectation of the arrival of the cardinals, for whoſe preſence they were obliged to wait, the *zelanti* redoubled their intrigues. Their moſt active agent was cardinal J. B. Rezzonico, nephew of the too famous Clement XIII. His talents did not go beyond mediocrity; but he had the memory of his uncle to revenge; wiſhed to ſerve the cauſe of the Jeſuits; and partook in ſome degree of the credit of his brother, the cardinal *Camerlingo*. He was therefore one of the moſt powerful inſtruments of that party, of which the two cardinals Colonna were the moſt conſpicuous, but not the moſt dangerous chiefs. Immediately under the Rezzonicos and the Colonnas, ſtood *Caſtelli*, a ſincere enthuſiaſt, whoſe amiable qualities were ſpoiled by a large portion of obſtinacy; *Boſchi*, a man of talents, of a gentle and inſinuating diſpoſition, but who had

had ſigned the famous brief againſt the Infant of Parma, and who thereby found himſelf engaged in the cauſe of the *zelanti*; *Paracciani*, enlightened, but inſincere, and ſolely calculated for intrigue; *Buffalini*, artful, acute, and enjoying great conſideration; with ſeveral others, who played a leſs conſpicuous part, but who, although in the back ground, rendered eſſential ſervices to the party. The two crowns then had againſt them both numbers and talents; and it required nothing leſs than their political preponderance, and the capacity of their two principal agents, to inſure their ſucceſs. Even with thoſe advantages, it was long diſputed, and at laſt was incomplete. They were obliged, as we are about to ſee, to capitulate with difficulties.

The long-expected cardinals at laſt arrived, and from that moment the ſcene began to change. It was time to put an end to the farce which the *zelanti* were playing, and for the conclave to think ſeriouſly of making a choice. Out of thirty-ſeven cardinals preſent, ſixteen were in the intereſt of the two crowns. This was enough to prevent the election of a pope decidedly hoſtile to their views; but as the laws of the conclave require a majority, conſiſting of at leaſt two thirds of the votes, it was not enough to enable them to diſpoſe of the tiara as they pleaſed. Beſides, the catholic courts were not even agreed among themſelves; that of Spain ſupporting Pallavicini, a near relation of its prime miniſter, the duke of Grimaldi; and Auſtria favouring Viſconti, who had been nuncio at Vienna.

But theſe two cardinals had nothing elſe to recommend them to the notice of the Sacred College; while Braſchi, who had diſcovered conſiderable ſkill in conciliating the favour of both parties, and who ſeemed to have leſs objections to fear than any other, was powerfully aided by the zeal and addreſs of cardinal Giraud, who had been pope's nuncio in France. The cardinal de Bernis alſo repreſented him to his court as an eligible candidate, provided no better could be found; and as great reliance was placed upon his diſcernment, his opinion met with no oppoſition. The inſinuations of cardinal Giraud were liſtened to by J. F. Albani, dean of the college, whoſe character at all times gave him weight; and who derived particular influence from his place during the vacancy of the Holy See. The miniſters of France and Spain augured well of his capacity and even of his intentions. Don Joſeph Monino, without giving

giving up Pallavicini, thought with the cardinal de Bernis, that Braſchi, although a creature of the Rezzonicos, would abſtain from all innovation upon the meaſures of Clement XIV.; but the Portugueſe miniſter was of opinion that his attachment to the Jeſuits was incurable, though pretty well diſguiſed; and that was ſtill at Liſbon a crime of the deepeſt die. Corſini, the miniſter of the court of Vienna, had formerly had a quarrel with him, the remembrance of which was deeply rooted in his mind. This double oppoſition occaſioned the dereliction of a project, that as yet was but in embryo; and all the brilliant hopes that Braſchi had indulged for ſeveral days, were completely done away. His name ſcarcely re-appeared in the following ballots; and the year 1774 terminated in the midſt of uncertainty.

Bernis began to fear that the influence of the two crowns would ſoon be reduced to little or nothing. He even foreſaw the poſſibility of a choice being made in direct oppoſition to their views; and demanded inſtructions how to act upon ſuch an event.

The cardinals could ſee no end to the prolongation of the conclave. They recollected with diſmay, that the election of Benedict XIV. was the reſult of ſix months confinement. Several, who were a prey to diſeaſe and to *ennui*, the moſt cruel of all maladies, came out of their cells; and even thoſe who made a paſtime of intrigue, began to loſe all patience.

Some turned their thoughts to cardinal Migazzi, archbiſhop of Vienna, againſt whom ſtrong prejudices exiſted at Rome, previouſly to his arrival; but who ſeemed to place a confidence in the miniſters of the two courts; and began to make ſome progreſs in their eſteem. He was weakly ſupported. Others thought of Borromeo, a man of ſenſe, but of a rough temper, and original turn of mind. He was beſides too much devoted to the Jeſuits. Others propoſed Caraccioli; but he was full of ſcruples, attached to bulls, and diſliked by the two crowns. Their miniſters regretted Braſchi: they ſounded him; and Braſchi affected indifference.

Monino returned to Pallavicini, and Bernis ſeconded him; but Pallavicini excited very little intereſt. They had next ſome thoughts of reverting to Viſconti: he was prudent, gentle, and timid; but his talents were of too humble a kind:

kind: beſides the *zelanti* obſtinately rejected every candidate propoſed by the two crowns.

Cardinal Zelada was brought forward, in order to reconcile the two factions; a part to which he was admirably ſuited. It was then agreed upon, that each ſide ſhould propoſe three candidates; and the attempt was twice made, and as often failed. Cardinal Braſchi had been brought forward by neither ſide.

While this was going on, an aperture was diſcovered in the wall of the conclave; and by ſome attributed to curioſity; by others to intrigue. Neither of them merited the accuſation. Intrigue, entirely concentrated in the conclave, had no need of fuel from without; while indiſcretion left curioſity nothing to deſire. It was much more probable that a deſire to purloin the plate of the cardinals had occaſioned this aperture, which was immediately cloſed; and nothing remained but the ſuſpicions to which it had given birth.

This little incident ſerved for a moment to beguile the *ennui* of the conclave, which was involved in freſh uncertainty. The miniſters of the two crowns, and the cardinals devoted to them, heſitated for ſome time between Viſconti, Pallavicini, and Braſchi. The laſt had thirty-two votes towards the end of January, which was two more than he wanted. The miniſter of Spain, before he gave up the point, determined to make another effort, and even to exhauſt his credit, in favour of Pallavicini; for the marquis de Grimaldi was highly ambitious of the honour of having the pope for his couſin-german; and Charles III. who was much attached to his miniſter, partook of his deſire. Catholic by virtue of his crown, and of a pious diſpoſition, he naturally kept up a cloſe connexion with the court of Rome, and could not be indifferent to the choice of a ſovereign pontiff. Beſides, as Charles III., Grimaldi, and Monino, ſtill harboured a ſtrong reſentment againſt the Jeſuits, the mere ſuſpicion of belonging to their party was enough to inſpire them with diſlike. The court of Verſailles, leſs devout and leſs hoſtile to the defunct ſociety, was not ſo ſcrupulous. Its only wiſh was to do nothing that might too much thwart that of Madrid; and the inſtructions it ſent to Rome amounted to no more.

Pallavicini ſaw, however, that the kind exertions of Spain in his favour produced no effect; and, either through timidity,

timidity, modeſty, or fear leſt his failure ſhould be attended with too much *eclât*, teſtified, with all the energy of which he was capable, that he was afflicted at ſeeing himſelf the cauſe of ſo much delay. Bernis made uſe of the moſt earneſt entreaties in order to revive his courage, and to get the better of his ſcruples. "We will not ſuffer ourſelves to be diſcouraged," ſaid he; "we will rather remain ſix months in our cells, ſhould it become neceſſary." Pallavicini was not to be moved; he formally declared that he would refuſe the tiara; and indicated Braſchi as the moſt proper perſon to reconcile all parties. Monino, who ſerved him rather out of duty than affection, yielded without much reluctance to this determination. Actuated by a regard for the court of Vienna, the miniſters of the two crowns made one attempt more in favour of Viſconti. The *zelanti* were entirely hoſtile to him; and it was not worth while to come to an open rupture, nor even to prolong a conclave already ſo tedious. At length the two principal parties were convinced that it was impoſſible for them to chooſe a pope among the cardinals, who were held by them reſpectively in the higheſt eſteem. Bernis and Monino, who by means of their talents, and the importance of their courts, retained the principal influence, were ſenſible that, as they could not ſucceed in ſpite of the *zelanti*, it became neceſſary to abandon the conteſt, and chooſe from among that party one of thoſe to whom the two crowns had the leaſt diſlike. They reverted then to Braſchi, whoſe friend cardinal Giraud had ſerved him with a great deal of zeal. Bernis and Monino completed the converſion of Corſini, the Imperial ambaſſador, and of the miniſters of Portugal and Naples; while cardinal Zelada negotiated with his uſual dexterity. He removed a number of difficulties; perſuaded the *zelanti* that Braſchi could not be dangerous; and offered to be reſponſible to the miniſters of the two crowns for his moderation, his principles, and his faithful obſervance of the engagements contracted by his predeceſſor. The road being thus ſmoothed, the cardinals, on the 24th of February, proceeded to a ballot, in which Braſchi was unanimouſly elected. The Sacred College, according to cuſtom, went immediately in a body to kiſs his hand in his cell, and to pay him that firſt homage to which idolatrous ſuperſtition did not ſcruple to give the name of *adoration*.

This

This narrative ſufficiently proves that the election of Pius VI. was not preconcerted, and that it was much leſs the work of the two crowns, than the reſult of circumſtances. Bernis, on entering the conclave, did not ſuſpect that it could ever take place; and when he began to deſire it, was ſtill without hopes. He announced it to his court in the following words.

"It is thought that cardinal Braſchi will fill his high ſtation with credit to himſelf: the public at leaſt has always entertained a favourable idea of him; and nobody denies him information, piety, and the moſt rigorous probity, from which he has never ſwerved. While yet a young man, he was honoured with the eſteem of that enlightened pontiff, Benedict XIV. who opened to him the road to preferment. Although he enjoyed a high degree of favour during the pontificate of Clement XIII. no action was ever imputed to him that could juſtify a ſuſpicion of fanaticiſm. Created a cardinal by Clement XIV. whom ſome evil-diſpoſed perſons had prejudiced againſt him, he ſubmitted ſilently to his diſgrace, and only appeared to recollect the favours he had received. In the beginning of the conclave he beheld with unconcern the project of his election deſtroyed almoſt as ſoon as formed. In a word, the whole of his conduct indicates *an honeſt man, full of courage, fortitude, prudence, and moderation.* There is no anſwering, however, for the events which may reſult from certain circumſtances; nor for the change which a too great elevation is apt to produce in the mind and diſpoſition of the greater part of mankind."—"God alone can penetrate to the bottom of the heart; men can only judge by appearances. The reign of the new pope will ſhew whether, before his election, he wore his own face or a maſk."

Such a horoſcope, drawn by ſo judicious a man as the cardinal de Bernis, was certainly a favourable augury. It was very far, however, from being juſtified by the pontificate of Pius VI. Not that before his elevation he wore a maſk which he afterwards laid aſide. Hypocriſy has no place among the defects with which he is reproached; but the performance of his functions has held him out in ſeveral points of view, in which the public till then had had no opportunity of ſeeing him. Though weak and obſtinate by turns, it is ſtill more to vanity, of which he had hardly been ſuſpected, when loſt in the crowd of cardinals, that his faults

faults and his misfortunes are aſcribable. But it would be highly unjuſt not to ſet down the greater part of them to the account of circumſtances. Neither the firmneſs of Sixtus V. nor the wiſdom of Benedict XIV. would have ſufficed to ſave the bark of St. Peter from the ſtorms of which it was the ſport during his long pontificate, and by which it was at laſt entirely ſubmerged.

CHAPTER III.

PIUS VI. *upon the Papal Throne—His firſt Tranſactions with Spain and Pruſſia.*

THE turbulent and capricious people of Rome, who, perhaps, reſemble the ancient Romans in thoſe qualities alone, did not at firſt appear to applaud the election of Pius VI. They regarded him as a pupil of thoſe Rezzonicos, whoſe incautious fanaticiſm had brought the Holy See into circumſtances of ſuch great danger; and applied to him a famous Latin verſe, compoſed under the pontificate of Alexander VI. and importing that Rome had always been ruined by ſovereigns who bore the title of *Sextus*:

Semper ſub Sextis perdita Roma fuit.

In effect, Sextus Tarquinius provoked by his tyranny the expulſion of the kings of Rome; Urban VI. began the great ſchiſm of the weſt; Alexander VI. aſtoniſhed Rome and the whole world by the enormity of his crimes, and Pius VI. has but too well realized the preſentiment ſuggeſted by his name. Never did prophecy appear leſs founded: never was any one more punctually fulfilled.

The new pope, however, ſpared nothing at firſt that could conciliate the good opinion of the public. At the moment when his election was proclaimed in the chapel of the conclave, he fell on his knees, and offered up his prayers to heaven in terms ſo moving, that the whole of his auditory burſt into tears. *Venerable fathers*, ſaid he, addreſſing

dreſſing himſelf to the cardinals, *your meeting is at an end; but how unfortunate is the reſult of it to me!* Was this mere affectation, or did he feel a ſecret foreboding of the fate that awaited him? He diſtributed money to the poor; took under his immediate protection a woman little favoured with the gifts of fortune, who had had the care of his infant years; and, in his firſt diſtribution of eccleſiaſtical favours, gave a preference to the moſt worthy and leaſt opulent prelates. To theſe benevolent acts he added ſeveral acts of firmneſs. He ſeverely reprimanded the prelate Potenziani, governor of Rome, on account of the diſorders which he had not taken care to repreſs; deprived Nicholas Biſchi, præfect of the *annona**, of his penſion, and compelled him to give in his accounts; declared that he would diſmiſs all thoſe from their employments who had acquired them by unworthy means; ſaved the Apoſtolical Chamber, by ſuppreſſing ſeveral penſions, an annual expenſe of forty thouſand Roman crowns; and promiſed to make the cardinals his adviſers in all affairs of ſtate. This was recommending himſelf at the expenſe of his predeceſſor, who had been ſingularly ſparing of his confidence. His whole conduct beſpoke him humane, eaſy of acceſs, laborious, and temperate. In a word, his *début* gained him almoſt every heart. But was there ever a ſovereign who did not begin his career in the ſame way? In a new order of things, is there any man indeed who is not equally fond of giving and of entertaining hopes?

His principal, and moſt difficult part, was that which he had to play with the miniſters of the two crowns, to whom he was indebted for the tiara, and with whom he had entered into engagements ſo much the more delicate, as they were contradictory to his ſecret ſentiments; for the whole courſe of his pontificate proved that at the bottom of his heart he was a friend to the Jeſuits. His gratitude was alſo due to the *zelanti*; and who knows what promiſes he might not have made them? He ſtood therefore in a very difficult ſituation. On both ſides he was under the influence of fear, and made alternate ſacrifices, according as one or other party threatened him with the more imminent danger. He was ſenſible how much it was his intereſt to conciliate the favour of the catholic courts, particularly thoſe of Madrid and

* A Conſellor charged to ſuperintend the victualling of Rome. We ſhall ſpeak hereafter of the *annona* and of Nicholas Biſchi.

and Verſailles; but he remembered alſo the tragical end of Ganganelli. Hence thoſe variations and meaſures apparently contradictory. Both parties attributed them to his duplicity; while in fact they were only aſcribable to that inconſiſtency which is ſo naturally attendant upon a want of reſolution. Could any thing elſe indeed be expected from a man who combined weakneſs of power with weakneſs of mind?

To the cardinal de Bernis, however, he behaved with a degree of tractability, which proceeded as much from inclination as from want of firmneſs. He often aſked his advice, and almoſt always followed it. It even ſeemed as if he affected to live in intimacy with him, and to give him public teſtimonies of attachment, and ſometimes of deference.

It was not enough for the miniſters of the two crowns to have ſeated in the chair of St. Peter a pontiff on whom they could depend: it was neceſſary that the perſons about him ſhould be ſuch as they approved. This was a condition, a tacit one at leaſt, of his election. They had no difficulty in getting cardinal Pallavicini confirmed in the place of ſecretary of ſtate, which to them was the moſt intereſting of all.

They would have wiſhed to procure the *datario* for cardinal Malvezzi, who had given proofs of abilities, of virtue, and of his attachment to France; but he was too odious to the *zelanti*; and Bernis, who was always prudent and moderate, did not require that Pius VI. ſhould give them too great cauſe of complaint, eſpecially at the commencement of his career —Let them, ſaid he, obtain ſome of thoſe places, more honourable than important, which you have at your diſpoſal; acquit yourſelf thus of the obligations you owe them; but be upon your guard againſt their counſels. After ſome heſitation, the *datario* was given to the worthy cardinal Negroni, whom the two crowns would have wiſhed to ſeat in the chair of St. Peter, in preference to any one elſe; and the ſecretary-ſhip of briefs to cardinal Conti, an honeſt, laborious, and liberal man, who was much better qualified for the place of ſecretary of ſtate than Pallavicini. But on every ſide ſome little conſideration or other was to be kept in view; and Pius VI. thus paſſed the whole of his pontificate, ſometimes in endeavouring to conciliate the favour of the catholic courts, ſometimes of his benefactors, and ſtill more frequently of his enemies.

Hence thoſe vacillations, and thoſe hazardous ſteps, which either became a ſource of regret, or made him the object of reproaches; and hence thoſe half meaſures which weakened authority and inflamed diſcontent.

Scarcely was he ſeated on the papal throne, when the *zelanti*, who affected to conſider him as their creature, had cauſe of complaint. They wiſhed him to become the miniſter of their vengeance, and the redreſſer of the pretended wrongs of the former reign. Ricci, the general of the Jeſuits, and ſeveral other furious partiſans of the defunct ſociety, had been confined in the caſtle of St. Angelo; and a proſecution had been ſet on foot againſt them during the preceding pontificate. According to the *zelanti*, it was proper that the death of Clement XIV. ſhould put an end to theſe rigorous proceedings. Pius VI. had the courage to declare, that the ordinary forms of juſtice ſhould be adhered to in regard to the accuſed; but this apparent courage was derived from the fear with which he was inſpired by count de Florida Blanca, who would not have ſuffered the ſmalleſt attack to be made upon his work. Nothing leſs than the firmneſs of that Spaniſh miniſter was neceſſary to countervail the influence of the numerous partiſans of the Jeſuits; that is to ſay, of all who at Rome had either fortune or intereſt, with the exception of a few cardinals, and of the monaſtic orders, who were jealous of the ſociety of Jeſus. The conſequence was, that, during this long pontificate, not ſix months paſſed without ſome attempt being made in its favour. Sometimes endeavours were made to entrap the eaſy nature of the pope, in order to extort from him ſome promiſe or ſome equivocal meaſure; at others, pamphlets were publiſhed fanatically injurious to the memory of Clement XIV. Every thing ſerved as a pretence for perſecution, or as fuel for animoſity. The different paſſions aſſumed by turns the maſk of religion, in order the more eaſily to attain their ends. Even the canoniſation of ſaints was made a ſort of political concern.

John Palafox, a prelate of the laſt century, diſtinguiſhed by his talents and his piety, but ſtill better known by his quarrels with the miſſionaries of the Jeſuits, while he was biſhop in Mexico, was become, a hundred years after his death, an object of contention in the catholic church. Recalled to Spain by Philip IV. he was promoted to the dioceſe of Oſma; led an exemplary life; died with a high reputa-

tion

tion of ſanctity; and obtained a place among the beatified. He would have remained quiet in this lower rank of the celeſtial hierarchy: but the animoſity of the court of Madrid againſt the Jeſuits ſuddenly created an intereſt in favour of one of their moſt inveterate enemies; and the canoniſation of the venerable Palafox, which was only calculated to gratify the vanity of his family, or to amuſe the leiſure of devotees, became an affair of ſtate. Scarcely had Charles III. expelled the Jeſuits from his dominions, when he requeſted it with the greateſt earneſtneſs. Clemen: XIV. dying without having been able to ſatisfy the deſire of the catholic king, the firſt mark of obſequiouſneſs required of his ſucceſſor was to haſten *this important deciſion.* He made a ſhow of compliance, but Jeſuitical intrigues prolonged delay, accumulated obſtacles, and thus favoured the ſecret repugnance of Pius VI. More important affairs called off the attention of the court of Spain. Charles III. died, and was ſucceeded by his ſon, who inherited not only his throne, but his piety and his prejudices againſt the Jeſuits. One of the firſt requeſts that he made of the ſovereign pontiff was the canoniſation of the venerable Palafox. The congregation *dei riti* collected all the documents that could throw a doubt upon his orthodoxy; among others his correſpondence with the univerſity of Louvain. Theſe were valuable materials for the perſonage, who, in the ridiculous language of canoniſations, was called *the devil's advocate.* The cabal profited by them; and Palafox, notwithſtanding the intereſt taken by Spain in his poſthumous glory, was for a long time reduced to the humbler honours of beatification. The Jeſuits alone were ſenſible of this obſcure triumph.

They obtained, however, leſs conteſted ſucceſſes, which proved a ſource of trouble to the unfortunate Pius VI. whoſe ſecret wiſhes were conſtantly at variance with his oſtenſible engagements. Who could have foreſeen that the ſociety of Jeſus, baniſhed from the countries devoted to ſuperſtition, would find an aſylum and undiſguiſed protection among heretics and ſchiſmatics? Two ſovereigns, perhaps the moſt diſtinguiſhed of the eighteenth century for their wiſdom and talents for government, conſidered it as a kind of point of honour to receive into their dominions the wreck of the proſcribed ſociety. They ſaw in its members neither the profeſſors of a corrupt ſyſtem of morality, dan-

gerous to ſubjects, and ſtill more dangerous to kings, nor intriguers, making religion ſerve as the maſk and inſtrument of their ambition. They ſaw in them nothing but enlightened men, proper, in many reſpects, for public inſtruction. Determined to watch over their conduct; to keep them within bounds; and to admit them neither into their courts nor into their confeſſionals, how could they look upon them in a dangerous light? Such, no doubt, was the reaſoning of Frederic the Great, and of the Imperial Catharine.

Frederic II. who had a great many catholics in his dominions, could not avoid keeping up ſome intercourſe with the Holy See; and had an agent conſtantly reſident at Rome. This was the abbé Ciofani, a man much devoted to the ſociety of Jeſus. His principal wiſh was to reſtore it to its priſtine ſituation; the great object of his miſſion to obtain a deciſion concerning the eſtabliſhment of the Jeſuits in ſome of the provinces of the Pruſſian monarchy. Would any one believe that the great Frederic intimated to the pope, that, as he had not been conſulted concerning the ſuppreſſion of the order, he had a right to conſider that event as never having taken place, and totally to diſregard it, by leaving the Jeſuits in his dominions upon the ſame footing as before? It will readily be believed, that the abbé Ciofani neither ſoftened the expreſſion of Frederic's diſcontent, nor tranſmitted to him very faithfully the circumſpect anſwers which he obtained from the pope. The king of Pruſſia was reſolved to retain the Jeſuits in his kingdom, in order to employ them in the education of youth. It was of little conſequence to him whether they were faithful or not to their vows, and to the ſtatutes of their order; but he wiſhed them to be contented, and to live with him in the way moſt agreeable to his views. Deceived, no doubt, by his agent, or feigning to be ſo, he affirmed, in a public declaration, that the ſovereign pontiff would not oppoſe the preſervation of the ſociety in Pruſſia; and when this declaration was communicated to the pope, the latter ſaid, according at leaſt to the abbé Ciofani, "that it was not in his "power to reſcind the deciſion of his predeceſſor, on ac- "count of the powerful oppoſition of the catholic courts; "but that he *ſolemnly* promiſed that he never would de- "clare the ſociety forming in Pruſſia to be an irregular eſta- "bliſhment."

Informed

Informed of this ſingular promiſe, the miniſters of France and Spain reproached Pius VI. in the ſtrongeſt terms, and charged him with duplicity. The pope excuſed himſelf in the beſt way he was able; preteded that his words had been miſinterpreted; and renewed his engagements. He behaved to his ſevere tutors with an appearance at leaſt of tractability; and never fawned more upon the cardinal de Bernis than after having received a reprimand. He was ſtill more afraid of the miniſter of Spain, whoſe court was more peremptory and punctilious than that of Verſailles, and who was himſelf far more irritable than the cardinal de Bernis. No wonder then if Pius VI. experienced a joyful ſenſation, which he found it difficult to diſguiſe, when M. de Florida Blanca was recalled to Madrid in 1777, to take upon him the principal adminiſtration of affairs. Spain was then repreſented at Rome by the duke of Grimaldi, who ſucceeded count de Florida Blanca, and by the chevalier Azara, who had been long in Italy, honoured with the confidence of his court, to which he had ſuch a variety of claims. But the pope ſoon ſaw that he had gained nothing by a change, on which he had at firſt congratulated himſelf. The duke of Grimaldi, an honeſt and well meaning man, but eaſy to be miſled, and ſeeing every thing with the eyes of his relation Pallavicini, appeared to adhere to the party oppoſed to the two crowns, and inſpired it with new hopes. But his embaſſy was little leſs than an honourable retreat, in which it was meant that he ſhould enjoy *otium cum dignitate*. He was frequently abſent; but the chevalier Azara did not for a moment loſe ſight of the Holy See. His vigilance and his firmneſs were often troubleſome; but he joined to his auſtere counſels marks of kindneſs, which conciliated at once the good-will and the confidence of the pope; and it may now be ſaid that his influence, and that of the cardinal de Bernis, with whom he always lived upon terms of the greateſt intimacy, ſaved Pius VI. from the commiſſion of many faults, and contributed, perhaps, to delay the ſubverſion of the papal throne.

As to the king of Pruſſia, he was determined to retain the Jeſuits in his dominions in ſome ſhape or other. In a letter, which he wrote as long ago as the year 1775, to one of the ſociety then at Breſlau, he expreſſed himſelf to this effect: "They may depend upon my protection. Neither the pope, nor any one elſe, has a right to preſcribe rules for

for my conduct. I promiſed the Imperial court, in the laſt treaty of peace, that I would maintain the catholic clergy in the ſtate in which I found it. I will keep my word; and if every one elſe chooſes to conſult nothing but his own pleaſure, I, for my part, will drive all the reſt of the prieſthood out of my dominions, and keep you Jeſuits alone." A letter written to M. d'Alembert, about the ſame time, when he was recovering from an illneſs which had nearly coſt him his life, contains the following paſſage: "I have lived "long enough to ſee ſtrange things come to paſs. I have "ſeen the pope's ſoldiers wear my uniform; the Jeſuits "chooſe me for their general; and Voltaire write like an "old woman."

It was not, however, out of any malevolent obſtinacy that he protected the Jeſuits. "I have," he was accuſtom-"ed to ſay, "a million and a half of catholics among my "ſubjects. It is of conſequence to me that they ſhould be "brought up ſtrictly and uniformly in the religion of their "forefathers The Jeſuits have given proofs of their ta-"lents for education; and it is only by exiſting in a body "that their taſk can be properly fulfilled. I am determin-"ed, then, that they ſhall ſo exiſt, upon condition of their "ſubmitting, in other reſpects, to the eccleſiaſtical laws "which the pope may think fit to preſcribe.." Pius VI., in order to avoid giving offence to the catholic courts, required that they ſhould lay aſide the habit of their order, which they continued to wear in Sileſia; and that they ſhould abſtain from preaching and adminiſtering the ſacrament. At the beginning of 1776 the biſhop of Breſlau communicated to them the intentions of the pope, which were alſo thoſe of the king of Pruſſia. They obeyed; but new ſtorms aroſe on their account in the other parts of Europe, where they flattered themſelves with the enjoyment of a leſs equivocal exiſtence. Pius VI. tormented by France and Spain, aſſumed from time to time, in regard to the ſociety, an intolerant language, which was foreign to his heart. Thoſe in particular, who were in Poliſh Pruſſia, gave riſe to complaints, becauſe they continued to live together according to monaſtic rules. But Frederic explained himſelf, on this occaſion, in ſuch a way as to ſtop the pontiff's mouth: "I will conſent," ſaid he, in a letter written in 1779 to the biſhop of Culm, in whoſe dioceſe the Jeſuits were eſtabliſhed; "I will conſent to ſacrifice their name

name and habit to the will of the pope; but as to the eſſential part of their inſtitution it ſhall remain untouched, and upon the ſame footing as in Sileſia, in order to favour the improvement of the youth committed to their care."

It was thus that the company of Jeſus continued to exiſt in Poliſh Pruſſia and in Sileſia. This was quite enough to prevent the partiſans of that too-famous ſociety from loſing all hope; and gave them room to ſay—the Jeſuits are perſecuted, diſperſed, and ſuppreſſed; but not annihilated. The catholic courts familiariſed themſelves by degrees with this exception; but their vigilance was only the more active to hinder the Jeſuits from obtaining farther triumphs. As to Frederic II. he readily pardoned Pius VI. the tranſient oppoſition which he had experienced, and with the ſource of which he was well acquainted. He even retained for that pontiff, whoſe faults were often imputable to himſelf, ſtill oftener to circumſtances, a kind affection, which manifeſted itſelf on ſeveral occaſions, when he ſaw him engaged in a conteſt with Joſeph II., who undertook to make reforms, juſtified by ſound policy, but afflicting to the church. He wrote to M. d'Alembert as follows: "The "only thing that vexes me is, that all this good was not "done under popes who merited humiliation; and that it "ſhould have been reſerved preciſely for the worthy Braſ-"chi; the man who has drained the Pontine marſhes."

Independently of his perſonal affection for Pius VI., he attached more importance to the keeping up of a friendly connexion with the Holy See than could have been expected from a prince ſo ſuperior to empty formalities. The title of king, which the elector of Brandenburg had only borne ſince the beginning of the century, had not yet been acknowledged by the popes; and he wiſhed to make that acknowledgment the object of a ſort of negotiation. During the time that Pius VI. was at Vienna, the baron de Reideſel, the Pruſſian miniſter there, applied for it perſonally to the pope, and obtained it in a private audience. Upon his return to Rome, he began to give the title of king, in his briefs, to the great Frederic. It may be made a queſtion, which of the two was the moſt honoured by this favour? Count Hertzberg, who knew how to ſet a juſt value upon it, as well as his maſter; but who did not, however, deem it unworthy ſolicitation, thought no doubt that it was calculated to increaſe the king of Pruſſia's conſequence in the eyes of his catholic ſubjects; and that nothing, having that tendency, ought to be overlooked.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IV.

Troubleſome Diſputes of PIUS VI. *with* CATHERINE II.

AMONG the ſingular occurrences that diſtinguiſh the end of the preſent century, few are more worthy of remark than the violent expulſion of the Jeſuits by the moſt pious monarchs of Chriſtendom; their proſcription, however reluctant, by the Holy See; and the kind reception they met with from two philoſophical ſovereigns; one a heretic, and the other a ſchiſmatic. Frederic the Great, and Catherine II., equally intent upon extraordinary things, thought they ſhould throw a new ray of glory upon their reign, by protecting the illuſtrious victims of oppreſſion; by welcoming to their dominions men renowned for their talents; and by redreſſing the wrongs they had ſuffered from the ſpirit of perſecution. The motives of their determination were, perhaps, combined with a feeling of ill-will towards thoſe pious ſovereigns who drove away the ableſt champions of their holy religion, and with a proud deſire to prove that the dangers, which had ſerved as a pretence for that important meaſure, were ſuch as could alarm only puſillanimous minds. But they were ſtill more ſtrongly impelled by the deſire to give to public inſtruction, in their reſpective ſtates, a form which, whatever ſince may have been ſaid of it, had certainly received the ſanction of experience in ſeveral catholic countries. They were both too wiſe to take ſuch a ſtep merely through malice or out of oſtentation.

However this may be, ſuch of the Ex-Jeſuits as had not taken refuge in the eccleſiaſtical ſtate had ſought and obtained an aſylum in countries of which the ſovereigns, though independent of the church of Rome, reckoned a number of catholics among their ſubjects: ſome retired to Poliſh Pruſſia; ſome to Sileſia; and others to White Ruſſia. They were living peaceably in the latter province, when a noble Lithuanian, biſhop of Mallo *in partibus*, who was reſident at Mohilow, with the title of apoſtolical viſitor, and who, from thence, kept up a conſtant correſpondence with the numerous friends of the ſociety at Rome, thought proper moſt ſtrangely

ſtrangely to exceed the powers given him by the pope. He permitted the Jeſuits of White Ruſſia to take novices, in conformity, as he ſaid, with *the intentions of Clement XIV. and of Pius VI.* Pius VI. was dangerouſly ill; and the cardinals, tired of the length of his reign (it had already laſted more than four years), looked to its ſpeedy cloſe. Now was the moment to give, in a diſtant quarter, the ſignal for the reſurrection of the Jeſuits. Before the demand that would have been made could be publicly known, Pius VI. would be no more. His ſucceſſor, whatever his principles might be, would find it a ſettled thing; it would be repreſented as the work of the deceaſed pope; and might, perhaps, be reſpected by the catholic courts, who would be afraid of expoſing the church to new dangers. Thoſe who were the moſt exaſperated againſt the Jeſuits were at a great diſtance; and their murmurs might be diſregarded, and rendered of no avail.

The event baffled all conjecture. Pius VI. recovered; and his convaleſcence was greeted by the moſt ſevere remonſtrances on the part of the miniſters of France and Spain. They reproached him with the ambiguous manner in which the powers given to the biſhop of Mallo had been worded. That daring prelate was born a Calviniſt; turned Catholic at the death of his father; married; was left a widower; entered into holy orders; began from that moment to act the apoſtle; made Warſaw the centre of his pious labours; found means to intereſt in his favour the Ruſſian miniſters who were all-powerful there; gained the friendſhip of Garampi, the pope's nuncio, a zealous partiſan of the Jeſuits; was, upon his guarantee, and the formal demand of Ruſſia, appointed biſhop *in partibus*; and immediately aſſumed the title of biſhop of Mohilow and of White Ruſſia. Such was this adventurer, who played the part of a fanatic, though he hardly believed in God. He involved Pius VI. in one of the greateſt embarraſſments which he ever experienced; prevailed upon the Imperial Catherine to eſpouſe his cauſe with a tenacity and haughtineſs which ſhe ſeemed to reſerve only for affairs of the higheſt importance; and occupied Europe for ſeveral years with the conſequences of his ignoble intrigue.

But what could he have done if he had not met with powerful ſupport even at Rome itſelf? The brief, of which he had made ſo improper a uſe, had been drawn up by

Borgia,

Borgia, ſecretary to the *propaganda*, an artful prelate, whoſe affections were well known; and (as was often the caſe with the precepts of our biſhops) had not even been read by Pius VI. His confuſion was only the greater, and his perplexity not the leſs. What could he do to appeaſe France and Spain, without offending Catherine II., without irritating her againſt the catholics in her dominions? He was required, however, to diſavow in the moſt formal manner the conduct of the biſhop of Mallo, and to threaten him with canonical penalties, if he did not haſten to recal his mandate. Nothing was neglected to extort that revocation. Spain ſolicited it directly at Peterſburgh, where at that moment ſhe was not in favour, on account of the recent ſtoppage of ſome Ruſſian ſhips. The imperious Catherine anſwered, through the medium of Czernichew, that as the king of Spain had, doubtleſs, had his reaſons for expelling the Jeſuits from his territories, ſhe had her's for retaining them in her empire. The intereeſſion of the king of Poland was employed. Catherine anſwered him in her own hand-writing: "I thank you for your interpoſition," ſaid ſhe; "but as the affair in queſtion is merely œconomical, "I ſtand in need of neither mediation nor treaty. I am "certainly miſtreſs in my own dominions.' Staniſlaus returned to the charge, and Catherine replied; "I will main- "tain the ordinance of the biſhop of Mohilow, which has "received my approbation; and if the pope procced againſt "him, I will protect him. I will rather conſent to a ſchiſm, "than to make any change to the eſtabliſhment of the "Jeſuits in White Ruſſia." It was not, however, that ſhe felt any great affection for the Jeſuits. She knew how little they were worth, bating their talents for public inſtruction; but ſhe was piqued, and her ill humour carried her beyond the limits preſcribed by her intentions, as well as by her intereſt.

There was at that time at Warſaw a nuncio (Archetti) of a mild and conciliating diſpoſition, who undertook to diſarm the reſentment of the great Catherine, and to ſpare the pope any farther mortification. He obtained permiſſion to convey to him ſome obliging expreſſions.

The courts of Madrid and Verſailles ceaſed to act in a direct manner. They were engaged in concerns of far higher importance; for this was the period in which they were making preparations for their war with England.

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They contented themſelves therefore with haraſſing the feeble pontiff, who, by dint of temporiſing, and under favour of circumſtances, extricated himſelf from this critical ſituation better than he could have hoped. But how much torture muſt he have previouſly endured?

In conſequence of the ſolicitations of the catholic courts, he requeſted that the brief for the ſuppreſſion of the Jeſuits might be publiſhed in Ruſſia. This was an expedient for annihilating the work of the prelate of Mohilow. In order to ſucceed, he had recourſe to a ſyſtem of wheedling, againſt which the great Catherine was not entirely proof. Till then the ſovereign of Ruſſia was not conſidered by the Holy See as inveſted with the dignity of emperor. Pius VI. wrote to Catherine, and, for the firſt time, intituled her, *Her Imperial Majeſty*. Her vanity was flattered; her anſwer was kind, and almoſt affectionate; but ſhe remained inexorable as to the brief of ſuppreſſion. In vain did the pope point out to her the example of the king of Pruſſia. Every ſovereign, anſwered ſhe, is maſter in his own dominions; and never, while I am alive, ſhall a bull be publiſhed in mine. This tranſient ſmile of benevolence ſoon gave place to a new paroxyſm of ill-humour. Surely nothing but the influence of the unlucky planet, under which Pius VI. was born, could have engaged him in ſuch frequent and ſuch unpleaſant diſputes with ſchiſmatic princes, whoſe ſtates were ſo far diſtant from his own. Believing Catherine a little ſoftened, he wrote to her a ceremonious letter, to requeſt that the archbiſhopric of Poloczko, which made part of her empire, ſhould, according to cuſtom, be intruſted to an *united Greek*. Catherine, ſtill piqued at the moleſtation given to her *protégé*, anſwered the pope; but ſhe did it in the Ruſſian language, annexing a Greek tranſlation to her letter; meaſuring her anſwer, line for line, by the pope's epiſtle; concluding in the ſame words as he had done; and putting at the head of it, *Catherine II., empreſs of all the Ruſſias, to Pius VI. biſhop of Rome, and pope in his own diſtrict*. The contents of this letter were anſwerable to the form. It was neither obliging to the pope, nor favourable to his requeſt; to which Catherine would accede only upon condition that the ſee of Mohilow ſhould be erected into an archbiſhopric, and given to the biſhop of Mallo. Hence new ſources of chagrin and embarraſſment to Pius VI. How was he to extricate himſelf from this difficulty? If he kept

no

no meaſures with the empreſs he would be the occaſion of five hundred thouſand *united Greeks*, ſcattered throughout the Ruſſian empire, being loſt to the Holy See. But how, on the other hand, could he brave the anger of the courts of Verſailles and Madrid, whoſe miniſters required a ſolemn recantation from the biſhop of Mallo, previouſly to his obtaining the favour ſolicited for him by the empreſs?

Reſolving, towards the end of 1781, to make a new attempt to appeaſe her wrath, he repreſented to her, in a lamentable tone, that he could not, without degrading himſelf, and without incurring a charge of weakneſs and puſillanimity, recompenſe a prelate who had dared to put a falſe conſtruction upon one of his briefs, and to attack the bull of ſuppreſſion; but let him only retract, and he ſhould conſider it as his duty to comply with the deſire of the empreſs. At this time the journey of the count and counteſs du Nord was in agitation. Pius VI. teſtified the concern he took in their welfare; and recommended to her the catholics of Ruſſia. The letter was entirely in his own handwriting, and full of the moſt flattering expreſſions. It was prelate, afterwards cardinal Antonelli, whom he had employed to compoſe it; and Antonelli was artful and inſinuating, and was already in poſſeſſion of the confidence of Pius VI. as much as it was poſſible for any one to be.

Catherine, who often blended the coquetry of her ſex with an imperious diſplay of her power, began her anſwer by a flattering preamble. She ſpoke to him of her children; and praiſed him for his ſucceſsful efforts to drain the Pontine marſhes; and for thus inſuring his own glory, and the proſperity of his dominions; but when ſhe came to the point, ſhe ſaid that ſhe had availed herſelf of her right, in conferring upon the biſhop of Mallo the archbiſhopric of Mohilow; that no juſt reproach could be brought againſt that prelate; and that he had only obeyed her like a ſubject ſubmiſſive to the will of his ſovereign. She concluded by ſoliciting the pall * for him, without ſaying a word of his recantation. *At the ſame time we join our voice to that of our orthodox church, which prays God for the re-union of all.*

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* An ornament which the pope ſends to archbiſhops as a mark of their dignity.

This grave negotiation, which no doubt ſerved Catherine and her courtiers as matter of amuſement, was ſuſpended for ſome time by a ſomewhat more ſerious quarrel between the pope and Joſeph II., and by the former's journey to Vienna. The affair of Mohilow was, however, recalled to the recollection of Pius VI. during his ſtay in that capital. Joſeph ſpoke to him with enthuſiaſm of Catherine II.; exhorted him earneſtly to gratify her; and pointed out the inutility, and even the danger, of reſiſtance. The poor pontiff returned to Rome, more undecided than ever: and on his arrival there was again beſet by the remonſtrances of his tutors, the French and Spaniſh miniſters. They diſtruſted his firmneſs, and even his intentions; but became ſomewhat more moderate in their demands, only requiring him to addreſs a declaration to each of the two kings, ſtating anew that he conſidered the ſuppreſſion of the Jeſuits as irrevocable.

Pius VI. begged they would be contented with the diſapprobation he had expreſſed of the conduct of the biſhop of Mallo, through the medium of his nuncio at Warſaw.

But in the mean time a new incident had occurred, tending to increaſe his perplexity, in an affair that had already given him ſo much uneaſineſs. Catherine II. impatient of delay, perhaps vexed at the kind of homage which ſhe had paid to the head of a church diſtinct from her own; excited againſt him by Czernichew, the great protector of the refractory prelate; by prince Potemkin, whom pride and the reſt of the worldly paſſions did not prevent from caſting a look of kindneſs upon a religious order; and by the harſh and haughty Stackelberg, who was irritated by the ſlighteſt reſiſtance; Catherine II. had granted the Jeſuits in her dominions the power of electing a vicar-general to preſide over the ſociety, *with all the privileges which that inſtitution formerly enjoyed*; provided only that they were compatible with the laws of her empire; and, without waiting any longer for the conſent of the Holy See, ſhe intituled the biſhop of Mallo archbiſhop of Mohilow, of the *Roman church*.

Stackelberg, on his part, declared, that Catherine II. abſolutely refuſed to comply with the demands of the pope; and that if he did not immediately ſend the pall to the biſhop of Mallo, and at the ſame time appoint an Ex-Jeſuit,

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towards whom ſhe was favourably diſpoſed, to be his coadjutor, ſhe would expel all the catholics from her dominions, and proſcribe their religion as incompatible with the dignity and authority of ſovereigns. The Ruſſian miniſter, who did not ſay a ſingle word of the appointment of an *united Greek* to the archbiſhopric of Poloczko, ſent a copy of his declaration to Vienna, in order that the court of Rome might not fail to be informed of it by Garampi, its nuncio. Never was weakneſs treated by arrogance with a greater want of feeling. At Warſaw the nuncio Archetti was ſtruck with conſternation; at Verſailles, and even at Madrid, great concern was felt for the unfortunate pontiff, who was expiating a thoughtleſs moment in ſo painful a manner; while at Rome enlightened obſervers foreſaw the approaching fall of a throne, ſtripped on every ſide of thoſe illuſions in which alone its ſolidity conſiſted.

Pius VI. was no longer ſenſible to any thing but the dread with which he was inſpired by the diſtant wrath of Catherine. He was in hopes that the kings of France and Spain would be contented with the brief addreſſed to each of them, by which he declared every thing that had been done contrary to the bull of Clement XIV. either in White Ruſſia or elſewhere, to be *illegal, abuſive, and of no effect;* that the two monarchs, engaged in concerns of greater importance, would require nothing more; and that nothing would be wanting to the triumph of Catherine's *protégé*.

Nor was this all. It was neceſſary to appeaſe the auguſt protectreſs. Pius VI. wrote to her again in the following terms: "You will have ſome regard for my dignity; you will not allow it to be ſaid that one of your ſubjects has offended me with impunity. Well, I will ſend a miniſter authoriſed to convert the ſee of Mohilow into an archbiſhopric, and to deliver the pall to the new archbiſhop; but your Imperial majeſty muſt ſuffer me to add to theſe proofs of deference this ſingle clauſe: *without prejudice to the maxims of the Roman catholic church.*

In the mean time Benilawſki, the Ex-Jeſuit, who was to be the coadjutor of the new archbiſhop, ſet off for Italy at the beginning of 1783, in order, as it would ſeem, to ſet the Holy See more completely at defiance. In every place through which he paſſed he flattered his friends with the ſpeedy re-eſtabliſhment of the Jeſuits. He ſhewed reſcripts, already of old date, in which Pius VI. permitted them to remain

remain in *ſtatu quo*, wherever the bull of ſuppreſſion had not been publiſhed. He arrived at Rome, and obtained from the pope a firſt audience, the particulars of which tranſpired, and alarmed the two catholic miniſters. Cardinal de Bernis endeavoured to enforce his old claims upon the tractability and confidence of the pontiff; but he found him terrified and overawed; and heard him make with his own mouth the apology of the biſhop of Mallo. Benilawſki was introduced by the agent of Ruſſia, and recommended to him by count Panin. How then could he do otherwiſe than give him a gracious reception?

As yet, however, Pius VI. was only beginning to give way. Benilawſki, who, under the meaneſt exterior, concealed a great ſhare of effrontery and addreſs, ſpared nothing to intimidate and to corrupt him. He was authoriſed by the empreſs of Ruſſia to require that the pope ſhould formally acknowledge the Jeſuits eſtabliſhed in her empire; and that he ſhould grant to thoſe who were employed in the eccleſiaſtical miniſtry the ſame powers as to biſhops. He endeavoured to juſtify the biſhop of Mallo in every reſpect. Pius VI. deliberated; ſhifted his ground; and would have yielded but for the auſtere counſels of cardinal de Bernis. Benilawſki grew preſſing; declared that he would ſet off immediately, if kept any longer in ſuſpenſe, and was conſtantly at the heels of the pontiff. Pius VI. avoided him. The impudent monk then declared that he would not ſtir from the anti-chamber till the pope ſhould admit him, and acquieſce in all his demands. His vanity and imprudence were equal to his effrontery. He thought himſelf ſo ſure of the dignity of prelate, that he purchaſed the croſs and paſtoral ring before-hand; had himſelf painted in the epiſcopal habit; and boaſted that he was about to be ordained by the pope in perſon. He connected him cloſely with Zaccaria and Ambrogi, the two Ex-Jeſuits the moſt remarkable for their fanaticiſm; and held out his ſovereign's reſentment as a threat. Pius VI. reſiſted like a man prepared to yield. It was eaſy to ſee that, being in his nature a ſlave to fear, he only exchanged his dread of the houſe of Bourbon for a ſtill greater awe of Catherine II.; and that the more readily, as the latter ſentiment did not ill accord with his ſecret affections.

In the mean time he received Catherine's anſwer to his ſubmiſſive letter; and his vanity had a few moments of enjoyment,

joyment, which conſoled him for every thing. The empreſs called him *moſt puiſſant prince;* and thanked him for the good grace with which he had been pleaſed to beſtow the pall upon a man of ſuch great merit as the biſhop of Mallo, whom ſhe had *confirmed* archbiſhop of Mohilow, giving him for his coadjutor the canon Benilawſki. She would receive, ſhe ſaid, the miniſter whom his holineſs meant to ſend to her court, in like manner as ſhe did *the ambaſſadors of crowned heads.* She even ſpoke to him of the gratitude ſhe ſhould feel in caſe of his attending to her requeſt; but all the reſt ſhe paſſed over in ſilence. She concluded by ſaying, that ſhe conſtantly addreſſed her prayers to heaven for the union of the church of Rome with *her orthodox church.*

The return of the empreſs's favour reſtored ſome little courage to the holy father. He diſmiſſed Benilawſki politely, but coldly, and without having granted any thing to his importunity; his direct intercourſe with the great Catherine exempting him from all neceſſity of negotiating with her ridiculous agent.

But immediately afterwards, Archetti, the nuncio, received orders to ſet off for Peterſburgh; and his miſſion gave riſe to a new ſtorm. The biſhop of Mallo had accompanied Potemkin to the Crimea. He was ſent for to Peterſburgh, where he found Archetti, who was diſpatched thither principally on his account by the pope. A nuncio at the extremity of the Baltic ſea, accredited at the court of a ſchiſmatic, and, what was worſe, a philoſophical princeſs! This was indeed a novel ſpectacle; and Archetti might have ſaid, like a certain doge of Genoa, the moſt remarkable thing I ſee at Peterſburgh is to ſee myſelf there. He was at firſt well received; but it ſoon appeared that he expreſſed himſelf with too much bitterneſs when ſpeaking of the Jeſuits. He was alſo blamed for going to envenom his hatred againſt them in the ſociety of the Spaniſh miniſter. From the very outſet the negotiation was obſtructed by a number of little difficulties; Catherine II. wiſhing to obtain every thing from the pope before ſhe granted him any thing whatever. In the firſt place it was neceſſary to attend to the conſecration of the new archbiſhop of Mohilow. Archetti being queſtioned relative to the kind of oath which that prelate would be expected to take, anſwered, that he muſt ſwear *not to tolerate heretics and ſchiſmatics.* However ſtrange

What Intolerance!

ſtrange ſuch a condition may appear, it exiſted in the nuncio's inſtructions; from which he could not venture to depart. He was bluntly told that thoſe inſtructions betrayed *a want of ſenſe and of reflection;* that it was ridiculous to impoſe upon a ſubject the obligation of perſecuting thoſe who lived under the ſame ſovereign as himſelf; and that as long as ſuch a thing was in queſtion, the empreſs would not appoint an *united Greek* to the ſee of Polockzo. At length, however, every thing was arranged. The nuncio was authoriſed to paſs over the ridiculous oath in ſilence; and Mohilow was erected into an archbiſhopric, and conferred by the empreſs upon the biſhop of Mallo. Archetti extolled him to the ſkies, and conſecrated him, as well as his coadjutor, Benilawſki; and, in all theſe formalities, the name of the Jeſuits was not once pronounced. The only thing that Pius VI. did for the ſatisfaction of the catholic crowns, who were pleaſed to inſiſt upon no more, was formally to except all the religious orders, whoſe exiſtence and inſtitution were not approved of by the Holy See, when he was renewing the powers of the new archbiſhop of Mohilow, in regard to the regular clergy of his vaſt dioceſe.

The Jeſuits, nevertheleſs, conſidered Archetti's miſſion as a triumph. The vicar-general of that order dying in the courſe of 1785, they inſerted a notice of it in the Warſaw Gazette, accompanying it with all the details of their eſtabliſhment in Ruſſia; and obſerving that the bull of ſuppreſſion could have no effect in the ſtates in which it had not been publiſhed. The next year they did more. To all the libels which they had circulated, in order to frighten ſome, and to revive the courage of others, they added a new one, in which they endeavoured to prove, the continuation of their ſociety in White Ruſſia, and inſinuated that the Holy See favoured their ſucceſs.

The catholic courts renewed their complaints, and obtained nothing but vain proteſtations. The pope began to be familiar with war; and appeared to be little moved by the intrigues of the Jeſuits, or by the accuſations to which they gave birth. Without offending the crowns, with which he wiſhed to remain in amity, in too direct a manner, he had reconciled himſelf to the great Catherine; and had kept up a political connection with her in the face of all Europe. He had inſured her powerful protection to five hundred thouſand of his flock, loſt in the vaſt empire of

Ruſſia. His vanity was gratified, his conſcience was at reſt.

The empreſs of Ruſſia, who loſt no opportunity of throwing every kind of luſtre upon her reign, pleaſed herſelf with the idea of ſeeing a prelate ſeated in the Sacred College upon her recommendation. Archetti, the nuncio, had been ſent to her court upon a miſſion, with the reſult of which ſhe had reaſon to be ſatisfied. A cardinal's hat was to be his reward. She requeſted the pope to beſtow one on him; but he was fearful of offending the catholic powers, who alone had the right of nominating cardinals. Some futile diſtinctions, however, ſaved their pretenſions; and Archetti was appointed cardinal out of the regular courſe, while he was ſtill at Peterſburgh. Catherine conceived the whimſical idea of inveſting him with the ſcarlet with her own hand. Scrupulous perſons were ſcandaliſed at the idea; but, at Rome in particular, *there are ways of coming to a compromiſe with heaven.* A ſchiſmatic princeſs inveſt a nuncio with the *inſignia* of the cardinalate! And why not, ſaid the ſubtle reaſoners, who would not have been ſorry to ſee this new honour conferred upon the Sacred College: *the cardinalate is a dignity, and not a character.*

The vanity of the college was, however, deprived of this little triumph; Archetti, on his return to Warſaw, receiving the hat with the uſual formalities. Catherine had manifeſted, in the promotion of cardinal Archetti, that perſeverance which ſhe employed in all her enterprizes. She ſpared nothing to overcome the oppoſition which ſhe dreaded on the part of the catholic crowns, and the ſtill more formidable weakneſs of the ſovereign pontiff. M. Markow was beginning to acquire the favour of the empreſs, and did not avail himſelf of it in the moſt modeſt manner. She ſent him on a miſſion to the pope. When Pius VI. heard of that negociator's arrival in Italy, he felt an emotion of alarm, expecting from Catherine II. nothing but extravagant demands. Was ſhe preparing for him ſome new embarraſſment? He already feared leſt, to fill up the meaſure of his humiliation, the Ruſſian envoy ſhould be charged to ſolicit a cardinal's hat for the new archbiſhop of Mohilow. He was deceived. The object of Markow's miſſion was merely to urge the promotion of Archetti to the cardinalate. As ſoon as it was determined upon, prince Yaſoupoff was ſent

to

to Rome to thank the pope. He ſtaid there ſeveral months on another account. He was extremely deſirous of executing a project conceived long before; a project of which the execution would have flattered the pride of Catherine, and have gratified the vanity of Pius VI. ſtill more than his piety: this was the union of the Greek and Latin churches, to which there ſeemed no great objection, but the low paſſions often triumph over intereſts of the higheſt importance; and the attempt failed, like all thoſe that had preceded it.

The diſputes of Catherine II. with the ſovereign pontiff had, at leaſt, reſtored a ſort of exiſtence to the Jeſuits. They affected to conſider the ſervice ſhe had rendered them as more important than it really was. Faithful to the ambitious plans which followed them beyond the tomb, theſe prieſts, who flattered the earthly powers when they could neither terrify nor ſubjugate them, continued during the whole courſe of her reign to worſhip her as their benefactreſs. In the year 1780, when ſhe made a journey to Mohilow, and condeſcended to viſit the college for which they were indebted to her munificence, they received her with the ſtrongeſt demonſtrations of gratitnde. In the Latin diſcourſe, which they addreſſed to her, the verſes, commemorative of the aſylum their ſociety had found in her dominions, were particularly noticed:

Tot pulſata malis, tot tempeſtatibus acta,
Exſpoliata bonis, et patris ſedibus exſul,
Fælix quod mediis hunc portum nacta procellis.

In fact, the Jeſuits were conſtantly protected in the aſylum that had granted to them at Mohilow, Polockzo, &c. They lived there according to their monaſtic rules; they were allowed to take novices; their colleges were frequented by young men of the moſt diſtinguiſhed families in Lithuania and Ruſſia; and nothing was wanting to their complete reſurrection, the object of all their hopes and of all their intrigues, but the formal acknowledgement of Pius VI. It was in the midſt of his vexatious negociation with the empreſs of Ruſſia, on account of the archbiſhop of Mohilow, that the grand duke and grand ducheſs made their appearance in Italy. This afforded him a favourable opportunity of conciliating, by their means, the good-will of their mother. Such viſits were always agreeable; and this might be uſeful to him. He redoubled his attentions to the il-

luſtrious foreigners. Although they travelled *incognito* under the title of count and counteſs du Nord, he ordered the moſt diſtinguiſhed honours to be paid them in all the cities of his dominions. They arrived at Rome on the 4th of February 1782. On the following morning, when, according to cuſtom, he was deſcending from the Vatican, in order to go and pray at the feet of the image of St. Peter, they placed themſelves, as if by chance, in his way; converſed with him for an hour and a half in the moſt affectionate manner; waited till he had finiſhed his prayer; accoſted him a ſecond time; and were ſparing of nothing that could flatter his vanity. A prince and princeſs, deſtined to fill the throne of the north, holding an amicable conference with the head of the catholic church, at nine hundred leagues diſtance from their native country, afforded a ſpectacle new to the eighteenth century. The moſt minute particulars of this interview are recorded in the newſpapers of that time, where we ſhall leave them. The count and counteſs du Nord made a ſtay of only a few days at Rome; but they returned thither on the 23d of February, in their way back from Naples; and were witneſſes to the pope's departure for Vienna. Before he proceeded on his journey, he indicated the preſents he intended for them. Beſides ſome valuable pieces of moſaic, and other curioſities, which pontifical munificence generally diſtributed to illuſtrious travellers, a faithful copy was delivered to them of Trajan's column in *lapis-lazuli*. The bas-reliefs of ſilver were ſculptured with infinite art; and the pedeſtal contained a time-piece richly ornamented. The workmanſhip alone coſt ſix thouſand ducats. Such magnificence may dazzle for a moment: it may become the ſubject of converſation for a few days in the remote regions of the north: but thus it is that a ſovereign ruins his finances, provokes the diſcontent of his ſubjects, and ſaps the foundation of his throne.—Catherine II. appeared grateful for the reception given to her children by the pope; but perſiſted nevertheleſs in her projects; the archbiſhop of Mohilow, and the Jeſuits, continued to be no leſs openly protected; and Pius VI. failed in the attainment of his object, or at leaſt of that which he pretended to have in view.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER V.

Of the Jeſuits, and of the venerable Labre.

THE intrigues of the Jeſuits were interwoven with the whole pontificate of Pius VI. and were re-produced in every variety of form. Strangers, as in the days of their proſperity, to all ſcruples, they availed themſelves of every circumſtance that occurred. They employed by turns aſcetic books and calumnious libels; the illuſions of ſuperſtition, and the light of philoſophy; making every thing ſubſervient to their purpoſe, from the atheiſt to the capuchin friar, and from the ſovereign to the beggar in the ſtreets.

The year 1783 was witneſs to the developement of one of their moſt abject, and, at the ſame time, moſt ridiculous plans.

In the courſe of the month of April, while Pius VI. was on a viſit to the Pontine marſhes, a report was ſuddenly ſpread in Rome of the death of a French beggar, who was become the object of public veneration. His body, which was expoſed for three days, preſerved, it was ſaid, the flexibility of its members, without ſhewing the leaſt ſign of putrefaction. He had lived nine years at Rome unnoticed by every one; but no ſooner had he cloſed his eyes, than the moſt edifying wonders were related of him. He had led the moſt pious and moſt exemplary life. Reduced to the loweſt degree of indigence, he added voluntary ſufferings to his unavoidable privations; covered with rags, he remained expoſed to the inclemency of the weather, and, by way of penance, ſuffered the vermin to prey upon his fleſh. Many perſons recollected to have ſeen him ſtand motionleſs in the ſtreets, and at the doors of churches, expecting, without aſking, the charity of paſſengers. It was ſaid, that he was accuſtomed to diſtribute the ſurplus of the alms he received to other paupers, and that he had predicted the moment of his death. The greateſt perſonages in Rome, the populace, and above all the prieſts, haſtened in crowds to his tomb where a great number of miracles were performed. The ſick were carried thither: they returned healed; and theſe wonders, as always happens, were atteſted by numerous

merous and creditable witneſſes. The moſt minute particulars of his life were collected; his portrait was engraved; and in leſs than twenty-four hours more than four thouſand impreſſions were ſold. While waiting for canoniſation, the title of *venerable* was adjudged to him. Men of obſerving minds were not long before they perceived that this was a competitor, ſet up by the Jeſuiſtical party, in oppoſition to the venerable Palafox, whoſe ſpeedy canoniſation the court of Spain was, at that moment, ſoliciting out of hatred to the Jeſuits. It was the heads of that party who appeared to concern themſelves the moſt about the beatified beggar. In the abſence of the pope, the cardinal-vicar gravely countenanced the diſguſting farce; and, at the end of three days exhibition, ordered the holy mendicant to be pompouſly interred in a vault conſtructed on purpoſe by the ſide of the principal altar of the church of *Madonna del Monte*. In his tomb was incloſed a brief notice of his life written in Latin, an Italian tranſlation of which was profuſely given away. In ſpite of the ſtyle of minute exaggeration, in which this ſingular piece of necrology was compoſed, means could not be found to render it intereſting. It was confined to the few following facts.

" Benedict Joſeph, ſon of J. B. Labre and of Anne-Barbe Granſir, was born on the 26th of March 1748, in the pariſh of St. Sulpice d'Anettes, in the dioceſe of Boulogne. After having paſſed his youth in the moſt orderly manner, under the care of an uncle, who was curate of Erin, he determined to devote himſelf to a life of penitence, and took the monaſtic habit in the convent of Sept Fonts of the Ciſtertian order. The auſterity of this mode of life occaſioned a diſeaſe, which he ſuffered patiently; but the phyſicians obliged him to lay aſide the habit after a noviciate of eight months. He afterwards went on ſeveral pilgrimages, particularly to our lady of Loretto, and to the holy bodies of the apoſtles Peter and Paul. He then came and ſettled at Rome, which he never quitted, unleſs to go once a year to Loretto. He lived at Rome upon alms, of which he reſerved but very little for himſelf, conſtantly giving the ſurplus to the poor. He led at the ſame time a very exemplary life, allowing himſelf only what was rigorouſly neceſſary for his food and raiment; holding all worldly things in ſovereign contempt; and edifying mankind by the ſevere penance he impoſed upon himſelf; by the continual prayers

which

which he offered up in the churches; and by the other eminent virtues which he diſplayed. Although, while living thus, he appeared diſguſting from the rags with which he was covered, he was, nevertheleſs, rendered *dear and amiable* to other men by his manners, forgetting himſelf and ſeeking only to pleaſe God. On the 16th of April 1783, after a long prayer in the church of *Madonna del Monte*, he was ſeized with a fainting fit, and carried to the houſe of a pious man, who happened to be there. His diſorder growing worſe, he received extreme unction, and, at an hour after midnight, departed this life. The following day his body was conveyed, with decent funeral ceremonies, at the expenſe of ſome good Chriſtians, to the ſaid church. The report of his death diffuſed itſelf through the city; and ere long, ſuch an immenſe number of perſons of all ranks haſtened thither to ſee him, that it became neceſſary to call in the aſſiſtance of the military, to keep off the crowd. His body was thus expoſed till the evening of Eaſter-day (the 20th of April), when it was atteſted by eye-witneſſes, before a notary, that it was ſtill *flexible, palpable, and free from putridity*. It was then put into a wooden coffin, which was ſealed with the ſeal of the cardinal vicar, incloſed in another coffin alſo of wood, and depoſited in a vault, conſtructed on purpoſe, on the epiſtle ſide * of the principal altar of the ſaid church."

This monument of ſuperſtition and hypocriſy is worthy of preſervation. It is well that poſterity ſhould know with what conſummate impudence the prieſts impoſed on the credulity of the people at the end of this enlightened century, in a city abounding with illuſtrious perſonages, with travellers from every part of Europe, and with maſter-pieces of art. It is well that poſterity ſhould be able to appreciate thoſe factious knaves, who, diſguiſing their worldly ambition under the maſk of fanaticiſm, had the effrontery to engage heaven in a conteſt with earth; called upon the devout to pay homage to a vile mendicant, whoſe only merit, according to their own confeſſion, was the having led a uſeleſs and diſguſting life; and thus expoſed to ridicule that religion of which they called themſelves the ſupporters; and paved the way for its final overthrow.

* In Roman catholic churches, the two ſides of the church are diſtinguiſhed by the terms, the goſpel ſide, and the epiſtle ſide. T.

Inſtead

Inſtead of the hand of God, the hand of the Jeſuits was plainly viſible in the whole of this affair. In order that the enthuſiaſm inſpired by the new ſaint might not cool, a collection was made to defray the expenſes of his beatification; and this pious care was entruſted by the cardinal-vicar to ſeveral perſons of diſtinction at Rome, notorious for their attachment to the defunct ſociety. Care was taken to inform all the friends it had in France of the miracles performed by the holy Labre, which wanted nothing but witneſſes; and of his prophecies, which were only known to his confeſſor, and which threatened the Holy See with great calamities, that were about to follow the ſuppreſſion of the Jeſuits. The biſhop of Boulogne, one of their furious partiſans, already announced to his flock, that they had another countryman in heaven, and recommended him to their devotion. He collected with ſcrupulous attention the moſt minute particulars of the life of the venerable Labre, both during his abode under the paternal roof, and after he quitted it. His relations, intoxicated with this unhoped-for honour, and little inclined to wait for the happineſs that would thence reſult to them in heaven, already thought their fortune made upon earth; and ſolicited penſions and benefices; while the ſage cardinal de Bernis, who knew not whether to laugh or weep at all theſe follies, ſaw a new article added to his diplomatic correſpondence. He adviſed the enthuſiaſtic admirers of the holy man to moderate their zeal; or at leaſt to defer the expreſſion of it, until it ſhould be proved that their new idol was deſerving of their worſhip. But at Rome nothing could repreſs the tranſports of devotion. To doubt the miracles of the bleſſed Labre was impiety. His revered images were profuſely circulated; the pencil, the *burin*, and the chiſel, emulated each other in producing them; and even the ſcraps of his ragged apparel became an object of contention. The pope himſelf, at a loſs how to act; dreading the reproach of favouring Jeſuitical intrigues, and dreading ſtill more the danger of oppoſing them openly, dared not refuſe to join his pious homage to that which was laviſhed upon the relics of the holy mendicant; ordered the bedſtead in which his diſguſting limbs had been laid to be carried to the Vatican; and reſolved to make it ſerve for the repoſe of his own.

In the mean time, information continued to be collected with regard to Benedict Labre as well at Rome as out of Italy. The whole of it did not prove to his advantage. It was even to be feared leſt one of his letters ſent to that capital of the Chriſtian world by the biſhop of Boulogne ſhould throw a damp upon the fervor of the devout. In that letter Labre adviſed his parents to read the works of a certain father Lejeune. Now father Lejeune had been a diſciple of father Queſnel. This affection for the productions of a Janſeniſt was a bad recommendation to the Jeſuits; but they had advanced too far to retire without ſhame. What was of all things the moſt important to them was to find food for ſuperſtition; and the bleſſed Labre anſwered that purpoſe as well as any one elſe.

His credit was ſtill more hurt by a rumour, that when ſolicited to receive extreme unction at the hour of death, he had made anſwer that *it was not neceſſary*. But what injured it more than all was the report made of him by the vicar of his pariſh, who affirmed that, notwithſtanding his entreaties, Labre would never conſent to come to his church to receive the ſacrament at Eaſter; and that his abſtinence did not deſerve to be ſo highly extolled, ſince it was well known that he often went to eat and drink at a neighbouring public-houſe, where nobody had been much edified by his frugality. It was alſo diſcovered, that his only confeſſor at Rome was the prieſt who declared himſelf the depoſitary of his prophecies, and who was notorious for his attachment to the Jeſuits. In a ſhort time, the latter were the only partiſans he had at Rome; but that was a great deal. Their moſt active agent was an Ex-Jeſuit of the name of *Zaccaria*, whom Pius VI. honoured with a ſhare of his confidence. It was he who was charged to compoſe the life of Benedict Labre in two volumes; and to furniſh a liſt of his pretended miracles. The pope, who never reſiſted with firmneſs the ſolicitations of the Jeſuitical party, ſuffered himſelf to be perſuaded to give a bookſeller the excluſive privilege of printing the hiſtory of the *venerable's* life, and all the writings relative to his beatification. The congregation *dei Riti* was already engaged in that important taſk; and was anxious to abridge the cuſtomary formalities.

All theſe intrigues, and all theſe efforts, did not, however, produce the intended effect. The bleſſed Labre was

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in vogue in thoſe countries only where the Jeſuits had a party. In Spain and Portugal his ſanctity and his miracles were objects of deriſion. In France, a few prelates alone endeavoured to bring him into faſhion; but in Rome, in that centre of religious mummery, he found for ſome time abundance of panegyriſts, and even of imitators. It was by no means uncommon to meet devotees in the ſtreets of that city begging like him; ragged, and motionleſs like him; and like him expecting alms from the paſſengers, but ſoliciting none.

Great pains continued to be taken to collect, upon the ſpot and elſewhere, every particular relative to his life. The moſt ſingular one is that to which amateurs are indebted for his much revered portrait. A French painter, of the name of Bley, who was at Rome in 1777, and who had it in contemplation to paint a picture of the calling of St. Peter, met at the corner of a ſtreet a young beggar, with a little red beard. He looked at him; and thought that his head might ſerve as a model for that of Chriſt. "Will you come to my lodgings, and be painted?" ſaid he to him in Italian. The beggar refuſed in a ſurly manner, and in an accent by which the painter knew him to be a foreigner—"Are you a Frenchman?"—"Yes, ſir."—"In that caſe, you have it in your power to render a ſervice to one of your countrymen. I wiſh to introduce the head of our Saviour in a picture I am painting, and am at a loſs for a model. You would anſwer my purpoſe. Pray do me the favour to follow me."—The painter's entreaties, joined to the word *countryman*, overcame the beggar's reluctance.—"With all my heart," ſaid he, "but upon condition that you do not keep me long."—"A ſingle morning will ſuffice." Upon this they walked on; and upon their arrival at the artiſt's the beggar became as motionleſs as a ſtatue. This was a part which he had been long accuſtomed to play. When the ſitting was over a reward was offered him; but he obſtinately refuſed it, and retired. The painter heard no more of him.

As he was not diſſatisfied with his ſketch, he preſerved it in a port folio, which he left at Lyons, in a journey that he made thither in 1782. During paſſion-week in 1783, a report was ſpread in Rome that a young French beggar, who enjoyed a high reputation for ſanctity, was dead; that his body was expoſed to public view, and attracted a prodigious

digious crowd; and that miracles were aſcribed to him. The painter had not curioſity enough to go and ſee him. He had ſomething elſe to do. After the interment of the beggar, the concourſe round his tomb, and the miraculous reſult, were the ſame. One day a model *, who was often employed by the artiſt, ſpoke to him of the dead man whom he had attentively ſurveyed. From the deſcription he gave of him, the painter recollected his French acquaintance, ſent to Lyons for his drawing, and ere long found his apartments crowded by the curious and the devout. All of them recogniſed the features of the venerable Labre To ſatisfy the impatience of the public, he put his ſketch into the hands of an Italian engraver, by whoſe means the portrait of the holy man was ſpeedily diſperſed all over the country.

This violent enthuſiaſm was not, however, of long duration. Before the year 1783 had elapſed, the *venerable* Labre was a little leſs ſpoken of; and the fame of his miracles was already upon the decline. All thoſe ridiculous ſcenes which, in France, had been acted at the grave of Paris, the deacon, were rehearſed round his tomb. The lame repaired thither to ſeek a cure; and notwithſtanding their implicit faith, and the mummery of the prieſts, returned as lame as they went. No matter; his miracles were already numerous and inconteſtable; and what inference could be drawn from a few abortive cures. It was the fault of the ſick, and not that of the phyſician. The congregation *dei Riti* was not the leſs buſy in the beatification of the pious beggar; but it was a work of time. It was neceſſary to collect information in all the places which the candidate had inhabited. It was neceſſary to have the moſt authentic teſtimonies. It was neceſſary to obſerve a number of ſlow and minute formalities; ſuch, in ſhort, as made it impoſſible for fraud to procure, for one of the profane, the reward that was reſerved for the elect alone. It was neceſſary above all to have money; for the church of Rome afforded nothing gratuitouſly. This was one of the moſt ſcandalous remains of thoſe ſuperſtitious times, when ſhe impoſed a tribute upon every ſpecies of folly. On ſome future day, indeed, it will ſcarcely be believed that ſhe dared to diſfigure thoſe brilliant apotheoſes, which ſhe borrowed from

* Model is the name given at Rome to the males and females who hire themſelves to ſuch artiſts as wiſh to ſtudy the human form after the life. T.

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the pagans, to ſuch a degree as to put up to auction the ſeats ſhe had to diſpoſe of in the celeſtial court, and to knock them down, not to men known by their ſplendid virtues, by ſome great ſervice rendered to their country, or at leaſt by ſome illuſtrious crime, productive of a change in the condition of mankind; but moſt frequently to vile and indolent wretches, who ought at leaſt to have been condemned to that obſcurity to which they had devoted themſelves.

The contributions, however, of credulity increaſed ſufficiently in a few years for the congregation *dei Riti* to accelerate the firſt triumph of the venerable Labre. He was beatified in the courſe of the year 1792, when the country which had given him birth was already reſcued from the clutches of ſuperſtition. Labre was then inrolled in the number of the bleſſed. There remained a ſtill greater victory for him to obtain; that which was to procure him his inſertion in the calendar of ſaints, in other words, his canoniſation. But the aſcent to this higheſt degree of celeſtial honours was difficult and tedious. There were a multitude of obſtacles to be overcome. It was neceſſary that a century ſhould elapſe from the death of him for whom that ſignal favour was ſolicited; and it muſt be confeſſed, that in theſe latter times canoniſations were become very unfrequent. None had been pronounced ſince the pontificate of Clement XIII. As to that of the bleſſed Labre, it is more than probable, that it is adjourned to an indefinite period.

CHAPTER VI.

Character of PIUS VI.—*His Taſte for ſplendid Enterpriſes—His Vanity.*

IT is, above all, in the conduct of Pius VI. in regard to the Jeſuits, that the principal traits of his character are perceptible. He never cordially acquieſced in their proſcription. He was ſenſible that the Roman pontiff had loſt in them the principal ſupport of his power; but, at the ſame time, that their intriguing ambition might render them formidable. During the greater part of his reign they ſometimes

times excited his regret, and ſometimes his fears. He never dared either to protect or to perſecute them openly. They were odious to the crowned heads, whoſe good-will it was ſo much his intereſt to conciliate. They increaſed the irreſolution to which he was naturally inclined; and often obliged him to act with duplicity, the uſual attendant upon weakneſs. This ſituation, which would have been embarraſſing even to a mind far more energetic than his, gave birth to ſuch a ſtrange inconſiſtency of conduct, that thoſe who for more than twenty years had obſerved him narrowly, could not, at the moment of his fall, flatter themſelves that they were thoroughly acquainted with his character.

Heaven forbid, however, that we ſhould wiſh to paint him in too odious colours. It would be unjuſt, even were he ſtill in poſſeſſion of his elevated rank. It would be baſe, after the cataſtrophe which has precipitated him from it. No; Pius VI. was neither wicked nor weak; but he had ſeveral glaring defects, which could not eſcape the leaſt diſcerning eye; and caprices which formed a ſtriking contraſt with the majeſtic gravity of the part he had to play. Nobody denied him ſeveral brilliant qualities, conſiderable capacity, an agreeable turn of mind, manners at once noble and prepoſſeſſing, an eaſy and florid ſtyle of elocution, as much information as could be expected in a prieſt imbued with the principles of his profeſſion, and a taſte for the arts tolerably correct. Impatient, iraſcible, obſtinate, and ſuſceptible of prejudices, he was, however, neither obſtinately rancorous, nor premeditately malevolent. Few inſtances can be quoted of his ſenſibility; many may be adduced of his good-nature. In leſs difficult circumſtances, and with means proportioned to his views, he would, perhaps, have paſſed for a prudent ſovereign. But his ruling paſſion was an exceſſive love of fame, which was the principal ſource of his faults and of his misfortunes. It was that love of fame, which, when not joined to a ſtrong mind, often degenerates into puerile vanity. He would have wiſhed to ſignalize his pontificate in every manner; and to aſſociate his name with the moſt ſplendid enterpriſes. His vanity, which was apparent in every thing, drew upon him frequent mortifications. Deſcended from a family ſcarcely noble, he plumed himſelf, from the very beginning of his reign, upon his illuſtrious race. To the modeſt coat of arms of his anceſtors, he added all the vain embelliſh-

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ments of blazonry; and compoſed an eſcutcheon which afforded ample room for ridicule. It is well known that the Italian people are more apt, perhaps, than any other, to lay hold of any thing ridiculous with mercileſs avidity. To two winds, of which the arms of his family conſiſted, he added an eagle, *fleurs-de-lys*, and ſtars. Theſe pompous armorial bearings were cruelly criticiſed in the following diſtich:

Redde aquilam imperio, Francorum lilia regi,
Sidera redde polo; cætera, Braſche, tua.

"Reſtore your eagle to the empire; his lilies to the king of France; and "the ſtars to heaven: the reſt, Braſchi, is your own."

His arms, and his name, were repeated a thouſand times over in Rome, and in the reſt of the eccleſiaſtical ſtate. They are to be ſeen, not only upon the monuments which he erected, and upon ſuch as he repaired, but even upon thoſe in which he made the ſmalleſt change; and unleſs Rome be utterly deſtroyed, the name of *Pius Sextus*, thanks to his provident vanity, will deſcend to the lateſt poſterity. While changing the Roman government, the French commiſſaries expunged it from all the profane monuments; but it ſtill exiſts upon all the ſacred edifices in which Pius VI. had the moſt remote concern. It was calculated in 1786, that this rage for availing himſelf of the ſlighteſt pretence for immortalizing his name had already coſt the treaſury two hundred thouſand crowns. It was this incurable vanity, rather than his piety or taſte for the arts, which ſuggeſted to him the idea of conſtructing a ſacriſty by the ſide of St. Peter's church. He there diſplayed a magnificence which may dazzle at firſt ſight; but which cannot conceal its numerous defects from the eye of the connoiſſeur. Good taſte may indeed apply to him the famous ſentence pronounced by Apelles upon the Venus of a painter of his time; *you have made her fine, beeauſe you could not make her beautiful.* In like manner the ſacriſty of St. Peter's, which coſt more than ſixteen hundred thouſand Roman crowns, is overloaded with all the moſt gaudy decorations which architecture, ſculpture, gilding, and painting, can afford; but it only appears ſo much the meaner when compared with the ſuperb edifice by the ſide of which it ſtands. It is the deſign of *Carlo Marchionni*, an architect of inferior talents,

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and recalls to mind the defective school of Boromini; the style being altogether low and ignoble. Its dimensions are contrary to the rules of art; and it is full of nothing but breaks, niches, and projections. The columns and the altars are, in a manner, concealed in obscure corners; and the whole is surcharged with ornaments of the most tasteless kind.

In order to erect this monument to his glory, much rather than to that of the god whose vicar he called himself, it was necessary to pull down the temple of Venus, for which Michael Angelo had so much veneration, that he would have considered the mere idea of touching it as sacrilege.

It may be easily conceived that Pius VI. was not sparing of inscriptions in the sacristy of St. Peter's. Over the principal entrance were inscribed these words:

Quod ut templi Vaticani ornamentum publica vota flagitabant, Pius VI., pontifex maximus, fecit perfecitque anno, &c.*

How great must have been his mortification, when under this inscription he found the following insolent lines:

Publica! mentiris. Non publica vota fuêre,
Sed tumidi ingenii vota fuêre tui.

Thou liest! the public voice was not consulted; thou followedst the dictates of thy vanity alone.

That motive actuated him in all his enterprises: before his elevation to the pontificate he had possessed the abbey of Subiaco, at the distance of twenty miles from Rome. There also he displayed, in the most expensive manner, his taste for magnificence. An abbey in which he had resided, a church in which he had celebrated the holy mysteries, could not be suffered to remain in obscurity. He spent considerable sums in embellishing Subiaco; and this is not one of the smallest reproaches that may be brought against his prodigality.

A protector of the arts, more out of ostentation than taste, he connected his name with the famous museum, which constituted one of the most beautiful and most useful ornaments of the Vatican; and the kind of glory, thence resulting to his pontificate, is not altogether usurped. That glory

* What the *public voice* demanded for the decoration of the church of the Vatican, Pius VI., sovereign pontiff, began and compleated in the year, &c.

glory had tempted him when he was as yet only treasurer of the Apostolical Chamber. The famous statue of Apollo Belvedère was, in a manner, exiled, with several others, in one of the court-yards of the Vatican. Braschi suggested to Clement XIV. the idea of forming on that spot a collection of ancient monuments; and, as treasurer, presided over the first rudiments of this establishment. When seated upon the pontifical throne, he added body and confidence to his brilliant project. He built round the court-yard of the Apollo vast apartments, which he ornamented with statues, busts, terms, and *bas-reliefs;* and gave to the rich collection a title which associated his name with that of his predecessor. He called it the *Musæum-Pium-Clementinum.* That museum gradually became one of the most valuable in Europe; Pius VI. neglecting nothing to enrich it. He claimed the right of pre-emption whenever any antique was discovered; and, by thus eluding the greedy interference of the antiquaries, procured monuments of art at the first hand, and at a moderate price. There it was that his vanity provided abundantly for its own gratification. Beneath each piece of sculpture which he had acquired, these words were engraved in letters of gold: *Munificentiâ Pii VI. P. M.* Most of these monuments of art stood in a bad light, and could not be seen to advantage without the assistance of a torch, the wavering gleams of which added to their beauty, by giving them life (if it may so be said); the only thing in which some of them were defective. It was thus that connoisseurs went to admire the Ganymed, the Apollo Musagetes, the Torso, the Laocoon, and, above all, the famous Apollo Belvedère, which is alone worth a whole museum.

Engravings and explanations of the principal works of art, thus collected, began to be published in 1783, under the auspices of Pius VI.; who was much flattered by the compliment. Lewis Myris undertook the task; and the learned Visconti, who, in the first moment of the revolution, was elevated to the consulate of Rome, added to the plates a luminous commentary, which at once proves his taste, his sagacity, and his erudition. They were both, it must be confessed, powerfully seconded by the pope. The first six volumes of this work, in *folio,* had already appeared in 1792; and the seventh was ready when the political commotions in Italy began. All lovers of antiquity must

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regret the ſuſpenſion of this undertaking; which does double honour to the pontificate of Pius VI.

Wherever there was any thing more ſplendid than uſeful to be done, the zeal of that pontiff, and particularly his name, were ſure to appear. Wiſhing to embelliſh the entrance of the Quirinal palace, where he reſided during the ſummer ſeaſon, he raiſed at great expenſe, in 1783, the obeliſk which was lying upon the ground near the *Scala Santa*, and placed it between thoſe two equeſtrian ſtatues, that have given to the eminence on which the palace ſtands the name of *Monte Cavallo*.

Though the erection of this obeliſk was in itſelf a thing little meritorious, adulation made it ſerve as a pretence for laviſhing upon the holy father, in pompous inſcriptions, the moſt ridiculouſly bombaſtic praiſe. But the Roman people, who were ſuffering a privation of the moſt neceſſary articles of life, while the treaſury was exhauſting itſelf in embelliſhing their city, did not partake of the enthuſiaſm felt by the authors of thoſe inſcriptions. A wag, who preferred food to obeliſks, gave on this occaſion a leſſon to his holineſs, by applying to him a well-known paſſage of the goſpel. He wrote theſe words at the bottom of the obeliſk:

Signore, di a queſta pietra che divenga pane.

"Lord, command that theſe ſtones be made bread."

Pius VI. took pattern from him, whoſe vicar he was, and abſtained from the miracle.

This rage for putting his name every where, and for ſuffering his *munificence* to be celebrated upon the moſt trifling occaſions, expoſed him to more than one ſarcaſm of a ſimilar kind. It is well known that there was no other bread made at Rome but little round loaves, weighing a few ounces, which were called *pagnotte*, and which coſt two *baiocchi*, or about two French ſous a piece. The price never varied; but according as corn was more or leſs dear, the ſize of the *pagnotta* was diminiſhed or increaſed. At a moment of ſcarcity, when the adminiſtrators of proviſions had been obliged to make an extraordinary reduction in the weight of the *pagnotta*, one of thoſe innocent mal-contents who exhale all their gall in raillery, thought proper to put an exceedingly ſmall *pagrotta* into the hand of Paſquin, and to write under the ſtatue thoſe pompous words, ſo often repeated in Rome:—MUNIFICENTIA PII SEXTI.

Bells had a double title to his predilection. They were connected with that worſhip, by the pomp of which he was ſo much flattered: and the greater their ſize, the farther off did they announce the holy perſonage by whoſe orders they were ſet in motion. Malignity reproached him, in this particular, with more than one grave puerility. There was, in St. Peter's church at Rome, a bell which only weighed 21,244lb. He ordered it to be re-caſt in the year 1783, with the addition of 400 quintals of metal. Three years afterwards he had another caſt of 280 quintals, and chriſtened it with great ſolemnity. Barbarous verſes were afterwards engraved upon it, which attracted the admiration of the devout, and offended men of taſte. It was loaded with valuable pearls, and decorated with eight dolphins, a crown, and a thouſand other ornaments; but the founder's art had failed him: the bell had no ſound. The wags made themſelves merry at the expenſe of the bell, the founder, and the godfather. They voted that this abortion ſhould be depoſited either in the *Muſæum-Pio-Clementinum*, or in the arſenal, after the example of the Abderitan ſages, who were of an opinion ſomewhat ſimilar in regard to a well, which was very ſkilfully conſtructed, and which wanted nothing but water.

In general Pius VI. was not fortunate in the enterpriſes ſuggeſted by his vanity. The ſovereigns of Rome, from the time of the emperors down to the preſent day, have prided themſelves upon enlarging, fortifying, and embelliſhing the port of Ancona. The ruins of the beautiful monument, erected there by the ſenate in honour of Trajan, ſtill atteſts the beneficence of that emperor. In modern times Clement XII. is the pope who has paid the moſt attention to the embelliſhment of that port. A triumphal arch erected in honour of him, oppoſite to that of Trajan, and his ſtatue in marble, are teſtimonies of the gratitude of its inhabitants. Pius VI. wiſhed alſo to give a luſtre to his pontificate, by making ſome addition to the works of his predeceſſors. The port of Ancona is indebted to him for ſeveral improvements; among others, for a light-houſe: but he was ſtill more anxious to have his ſtatue erected there, than to deſerve it. In 1789, while the workmen were employed in it, part of the ſcaffolding gave way, and killed a great number of them. This accident, joined to ſo many others, was conſidered as a bad omen; and in fact

Pius

Pius VI. was now approaching the era of his greateſt misfortunes.

But it was in the performance of his pontifical functions, above all, that his taſte for oſtentation was diſplayed; and that his vanity found frequent opportunities of gratification. It muſt be confeſſed, that, on thoſe occaſions, he was as much favoured by nature as by the pompous ceremonies of the Roman catholic church. He was in all reſpects one of the handſomeſt men of his time. To a very lofty ſtature he joined a noble and expreſſive ſet of features, and a florid complexion, which the hand of time itſelf ſeemed to ſpare. He contrived to wear his pontifical habits in ſuch a way, that they deprived him of none of his perſonal advantages. In every thing he did he diſplayed them with a refinement of coquetry which gave great ſcope to ridicule. When elevated to the papacy, he had, in conformity with a cuſtom that had grown into a law, laid aſide the peruke, which he wore while cardinal. His forehead was entirely bald; but there remained behind, and on each ſide of his head, a ring of hair of the moſt brilliant white, which gave him a look at once noble and venerable. He had alſo one of the handſomeſt legs in Italy; and was not a little vain of it. Not wiſhing that his long pontifical robes ſhould entirely conceal that part of his perſon, to the adorning of which he was always ſcrupulouſly attentive, he took great care to hold them up on one ſide, ſo that one of his legs was entirely expoſed to view. This affected diſplay of his hair and legs, ſo unworthy of a grave pontiff, gave occaſion to the following diſtich, which, though bad enough in itſelf, ſerves, however, as a proof that no opportunity was loſt of turning him into ridicule:

Aſpice, Roma, Pium. Pius! haud eſt; aſpice mimum—
Luxuriante comâ, luxuriante pede.

"Rome, look at Pius. He Pius! no indeed:
"He is a comedian. Behold the diſplay of his hair;
"And ſee how vain he is of his leg."

Nothing, indeed, was more ſtriking than to ſee him, on days of great parade, crowned with the triple diadem, arrayed in robes of the moſt dazzling white, which contraſted with the ſplendor of the Roman purple, ſoaring in a manner over a crowd of eccleſiaſtics of every rank, and ſeeming thereby to announce his ſway over the univerſal

church. On theſe ſolemn occaſions all the members of the clergy came and adored him repeatedly; and each claſs in a different way. The cardinals were not permitted to kiſs his hand till they had bowed down before his throne. The prelates and heads of orders bowed ſtill more humbly, and only roſe as high as his knees; while the inferior clergy remained at his feet. The allegory of the ſtatuary, proſtrate before the work of his own hands, was never better applied than to this ſtupid veneration, particularly of the cardinals for the ſovereign pontiff—the creature of their intrigues and of their caprices; in which not one of them, perhaps, ſeriouſly thought that he ſaw the work of the Holy Ghoſt.

It is needleſs to ſay with what an eye of pity philoſophy looks down upon this humiliating homage, paid by a multitude of reaſonable beings to one of their fellow-creatures. Many ſpectators, however,—many even of thoſe who were the moſt ſtrongly guarded againſt all theſe vain illuſions, could not help feeling a ſtrong emotion at the ſight of the pomp that ſurrounded St. Peter's chair, eſpecially while it was occupied by Pius VI. The greateſt magnificence accompanied him whenever he went out. A carriage, at the back of which he was ſeated alone in an arm chair richly ornamented, moved forward, eſcorted by ſervants on horſeback, and in long clothes, driven by a coachman and poſtillions, with their heads uncovered, rolling along majeſtically ſlow between two rows of foot ſoldiers, and followed by detachments of light horſe and cuiraſſiers. It was impoſſible for any thing to be more ſtriking.

But when he officiated in the grand ceremonies of the church, it was difficult even for heretics, for free-thinkers even, to avoid feeling a ſort of religious enthuſiaſm. An Engliſhman (John Moore), after having deſcribed one of theſe ſights, whither he had carried nothing but a very profane ſpirit of curioſity; but where he had admired the dignity and grace with which Pius VI. performed his part, cannot help adding: "No ceremony can be better calcu-
"lated for ſtriking the ſenſes, and impoſing on the under-
"ſtanding, than this of the ſupreme pontiff giving the
"bleſſing from the balcony of St. Peter's. For my own
"part, if I had not, in my early youth, received impreſ-
"ſions highly unfavourable to the chief actor in this mag-
"nificent interlude, I ſhould have been in danger of pay-
"ing him a degree of reſpect very inconſiſtent with the re-

"ligion

" ligion in which I was educated." Let us hear the deſcription given of one of theſe ceremonies by another eye-witneſs, whoſe teſtimony certainly is not ſuſpicious. It is that of a proteſtant, and of a proteſtant philoſopher.

" The ſolemnities of the day of the Aſcenſion conſiſt in " the ſolemn adoration of the pope by the Sacred College, " and in the public benediction he beſtows. It is on this " occaſion that Pius VI. diſplays all the graces of his perſon; " that he renders almoſt ſupportable the diſguſting cere- " mony of kiſſing his hands and feet; and that he diſtri- " butes benedictions with unparalleled dignity. With his " body leaning a little forward, as if deſirous of raiſing up " the perſon who is about to kneel down before him, he " preſents to the cardinal, who is approaching, his hand to " kiſs, and while a prelate, ſtanding by his ſide, gently " lifts up his robe, and diſcovers an elegantly ſhaped leg, " he holds out his foot ready to receive its ſhare of the ho- " mage.

" The cardinal, on his knees, kiſſes the foot of the pon- " tiff, who gives him his benediction, and while he is riſing, " the kiſs of peace upon the forehead.—When the cere- " mony was over, Pius VI., arrayed in his pontifical ha- " bits, ſeated himſelf in the arm-chair prepared for him, " and was carried with great pomp to the *loggia*, a kind of " tribune over the entrance of St. Peter's church. At the " moment when the inner curtain of that tribune was drawn " back, the ſeat on which the pope was ſitting was brought " forward to the balluſtrade, a ſalute of artillery was heard " from the caſtle of St. Angelo, and all the bells of Rome " were ſet a ringing together. At the ſame inſtant the " ſquare before the church, in which the pope's guards " were drawn up, reſounded with martial muſic; while the " acclamations of a prodigious number of ſpectators, in- " toxicated with enthuſiaſm, confounded themſelves with " the rattling of the kettle drums and the ſhrill tones of the " trumpets. A perfect calm ſucceeded this univerſal com- " motion, this ſtunning mixture of ſhouts and muſical " ſounds. The pope then roſe from his ſeat, and inſtantly the " whole of the immenſe crowd fell on their knees before " him. He lifted up his eyes, extended his arms towards " heaven, drew them ſlowly back acroſs his breaſt, ſpread " them again as if to pour down upon Rome and the uni- " verſe the bleſſings he had juſt obtained from heaven, and " diſappeared from the tribune."

Let

Let us alſo liſten to the deſcription that the ſame obſerver has given of the no leſs ſtriking part which the pope played in the proceſſion of Corpus Chriſti. It will beſides furniſh us *en paſſant* with a few traits of the diſpoſition of that nation, which we imagined to be ripe for liberty.

" After that crowd of religious corporations, of which the population of Rome was principally compoſed, had been ſeen to file off for two whole hours in the greateſt order, all on a ſudden the ear was ſtruck by the ringing of bells, and by the report of the cannon of the caſtle of St. Angelo. This was to announce the appearance of the ſovereign pontiff: who was brought in ſtate out of the great door of St. Peter's church. It is equally impoſſible for the pen to deſcribe the truly pictureſque beauty of this group, and the profound impreſſion it made upon the moſt indifferent ſpectators. Sitting upon a kind of litter, covered with cloth of gold, the venerable old man, whoſe fine figure age had reſpected, was borne aloft upon the ſhoulders of his guards; and thus moved on under a magnificent canopy, ſupported by the moſt diſtinguiſhed perſonages of his court. The ſteps of the bearers were ſlow, and ſo meaſured, that the pontiff ſeemed to hover in the air over the heads of all around him. He was afterwards ſeen to lean forward, in order to reach the altar on which the conſecrated wafer was expoſed in an *oſtenſoir* * enriched with diamonds. Although the pope was really ſitting, yet, as in that poſition, he was entirely ſurrounded by an immenſe robe of white ſattin, embroidered with crowns of gold, which hung down in waving folds as low as the ſhoulders of his bearers, and entirely covered his ſeat, and the altar itſelf, he ſeemed to be on his knees before the holy ſacrament. Of all his perſon nothing was viſible, but his hands joined together and laid upon the altar, and his bare head adorned with his white hair. In that attitude, he prayed in a low voice, while his eyes, lifted up towards heaven, were moiſtened with the tears of compunction; and every feature expreſſed the moſt fervent devotion. Is it aſtoniſhing, that a ſcene ſo well contrived, and diſpoſed with ſo much art in every particular, ſhould produce upon the multitude the expected effect? It was ſo general, and ſo ſtrongly marked, that it was impoſſible to avoid being deeply affected. From the very moment,

* The box in which the Roman catholic prieſts expoſe the hoſt to the view of the public.

when

when the diſcharge of artillery and the ringing of bells firſt announced the approach of the pope, and when the pyramidal group was ſeen coming forward, and paſſing through the gates of the church, the people had fallen proſtrate upon the ground, as if ſtruck by lightning; then, beating their boſoms, had lifted up their eyes full of reſpect and religious awe towards the pope, who was approaching the holy ſacrament; and, as if a divinity had appeared to them, followed him with looks of admiration, until he had entirely vaniſhed from their ſight. Several princes, and the pope's generals, clad in cuiraſſes of poliſhed ſteel, walked in his retinue. A great number of his life-guards, the Swiſs in his pay, and his guards, both horſe and foot, compoſed the ſolemn proceſſion, which took up near five hours in paſſing through the colonnades, and three of the neighbouring ſtreets. The pope afterwards aſcended the principal altar of St. Peter's church, and gave his apoſtolical benediction to the people who crowded round him: that ſame people, ſo pious and devout, then retired to paſs the reſt of the day in the moſt licentious orgies, which frequently ended in ſtabbing and aſſaſſination. So ſlight is the impreſſion really made upon them, though apparently ſo ſtrong. The art of the prieſts has invented this magic picture, in order to keep the people for ſome hours in a ſtate of religious ſtupefaction; but what have they done for their improvement? Their end is to dazzle and to ſubjugate them; but not to reform their manners."

To the reflections of the philoſopher, we will only add, that the Roman nation, ſo devout and ſo depraved, continued, till the overthrow of the papal throne, to pay to him who occupied it, this idolatrous homage, the evident mark of their ſervile attachment; but at the ſame time, while they adored the pontiff, they often curſed the ſovereign. Pius VI. like him whoſe vicar he called himſelf, was endowed with a two-fold nature. Clad in his pontifical habits, ſurrounded by the pomp of religious ceremonies, and employed in the diſtribution of celeſtial treaſures, Pius VI. appeared to the Romans to be a god. On his return to the Vatican, he was no more in their eyes, particularly during the laſt years of his pontificate, than a man expoſed to their murmurs, and to their ſarcaſms. This double ſovereignty was ſo far ſingular, that the ſceptre conſidered itſelf as inviolable under ſhelter of the tiara; that the devotion of the

ſubjects

The ſceptre ſheltered under the Tiara!

ſubjects ſeemed to inſure their obedience; and that the benedictions, the indulgences, and all the celeſtial favours, of which the monarchical demi-god had undertaken to be the diſtributor, had at once for object and reſult to ſanctify, to overawe, and to diſarm them. Accordingly nothing leſs than the violent hurricane of the French revolution was neceſſary to tear up by the roots that gigantic tree,

> De qui la tête au ciel étoit voiſine,
> Et dont les pieds touchoient à l'empire des morts †.

It remains to be obſerved, that all thoſe pompous mummeries, of which we have juſt given a few ſpecimens, had long been an appendage of the pontifical throne; but no pope had combined, in the ſame degree as Pius VI., every thing neceſſary to inſure their effect. His predeceſſor, much more meritorious than he in a variety of reſpects, was humane, affable, and generous. He poſſeſſed all the domeſtic virtues; but he retained under the tiara all the modeſty of his former ſituation in life; and felt a ſort of philoſophical diſdain for oſtentation. The principal perſons about him, ſenſible how much the parade of ceremonies added to the temporal power of the Roman catholic church and increaſed the illuſion of which it ſtands ſo much in need, were vexed at Ganganelli's neglecting, with a ſort of affectation, that external dignity which impoſes ſo much upon the vulgar. The ſacred charm was about to vaniſh. The pontiff ſeemed deſirous of diſtinguiſhing himſelf only by his ſimplicity. Braſchi, on the contrary, poſſeſſed in his manners, in his taſte, and in his exterior, every thing that was capable of impreſſing mankind with reſpect. The ſtriking contraſt that exiſted, in that particular, between him and his predeceſſor, gave riſe to a belief that the cardinals, in electing Pius VI. had been actuated above all by the hope that the chair of St. Peter, debaſed by Ganganelli, would riſe again, and ſhine with renovated ſplendor. An Engliſh traveller obſerved, that in this they imitated the Roman ſenate, which ſometimes choſe a dictator in order to reſtore the antient diſcipline.

The hope of the cardinals was not deceived, at leaſt in that reſpect. No pope ever diſplayed more pomp than Pius VI. in the performance of his functions; nor was the prevailing

† Of which the head approached the ſkies, and the feet reached down to the manſions of the dead.

vailing taſte of any of his predeceſſors ever more favoured by circumſtances. The rage for viſiting Italy was become general; and had reached every country and every rank. Pius VI. had the good fortune, ſo dear to his vanity, of reviewing a whole crowd of great perſonages, including moſt of the princes of Europe, of receiving their homage, and of doing the honours of his court and church in the preſence of the moſt illuſtrious viſitors.

The epoch at which he was elected procured him, during the very firſt year of his pontificate, one of thoſe occaſions of unfrequent occurrence, on which the Roman church diſplays the greateſt pomp, and is moſt laviſh of ſpiritual treaſures; we mean the jubilee, which was a real *bonne fortune* to Pius VI. It will ſoon be forgotten in France; but, perhaps, it is yet remembered, that there were jubilees of two kinds; the one which recurred periodically was properly called the *Holy Year*; the other was the *Jubilee of Exaltation*, and was celebrated at the acceſſion of a new pope to the pontifical throne. The firſt, as being the moſt uncommon, was beyond compariſon the moſt ſolemn.

It was firſt eſtabliſhed in 1300 by Boniface VIII. who, wiſhing to ſanctify the profane inſtitution of the ſecular games of ancient Rome, conceived the idea of indicating the firſt year of each century as that in which heaven, more particularly propitious, would in future ſhower down upon the faithful a larger portion of thoſe bleſſings, of which the popes called themſelves the diſpenſers. Clement VI. was of opinion, that theſe periods, ſo favourable to the faithful, and ſo glorious to the Holy See, were too diſtant; and ordered that they ſhould recur every fifty years. The ſecond jubilee was therefore celebrated in 1350. Sextus V. improved ſtill farther upon the liberality of his predeceſſors; and ordained that the jubilee ſhould take place every five and twenty years, which has been the practice ever ſince.

Clement XIV. already attacked by the lingering diſeaſe of which he died, had in the month of April, as we have already ſaid, announced the opening of the holy year, in full conſiſtory. It was reſerved for another to celebrate it. Pius VI. had *that happineſs* in the following year; and, but for the cataſtrophe which precipitated him from his throne, would probably have enjoyed it a ſecond time.

The jubilee of 1775, in all probability the laſt, was celebrated with a degree of magnificence, ſurpaſſing that of

all

all the preceding ones. It was on this occaſion, that Pius VI. gave the firſt proof of his taſte for pompous ceremonies. One of the principal circumſtances of the feſtival, that indeed which may be called the firſt act of it, is the opening of the famous *porta ſanta*, or ſacred door. This door, which is one of thoſe of St. Peter's church, remained conſtantly ſhut except during the holy year. It was then opened with a parade of which Pius VI. took care not to diminiſh the effect. It was his office to preſide over the demolition of a brick wall, that cloſed the entrance of the ſacred door. Advancing with majeſtic gravity, he ſtruck the firſt ſtroke, and inſtantly the wall fell to the ground under the redoubled blows of the workmen, to whom the ſignal had been given. The pious ſpectators eagerly ſeized upon the materials; each ſtone being an object of high veneration. By their contact with that which was laid four-and-twenty years before by the ſacred hands of the ſovereign pontiff, they had acquired the virtue of curing all ſorts of diſeaſes. According to cuſtom, the *porta ſanta* remained open during all the holy year, and was the ſcene of the moſt ridiculous mummery. The pope himſelf did not paſs through it without exhibiting marks of the moſt profound reſpect; while the pilgrims, diſdaining the numerous paſſages which lead into the church of St. Peter, entered it only by crawling under the ſacred door upon their hands and knees. It was ſhut with great ſolemnity at the end of the year. The pope approached, ſitting upon a kind of throne, and ſurrounded by the cardinals; and an anthem was ſung, accompanied by loud muſic: it was the lyre of Amphion about to rebuild the walls of Thebes. The pontiff then deſcended with a gold trowel in his hand; laid the firſt ſtone of the wall which was to laſt twenty-five years; put a little mortar upon it; and reaſcended his throne. Real maſons took his place, and completed the blocking up of the ſacred door, the ceremony cloſing with a ſolemn maſs. Thus did the Roman catholics laviſh the auguſt myſteries of their religion, ſometimes upon the baptiſm of a bell, and ſometimes upon the rebuilding of a wall.

The following day the feſtival was continued, Pius VI. diſplaying in it all his great talents for acting, which were hitherto but little known. He was already near ſixty years of age; but his complexion ſtill retained ſomewhat of the brilliant colouring of youth. The Romans, accuſtomed to

ſee their pontiffs bending under the weight of years, and labouring in the performance of their public functions, which were often long and fatiguing, admired the addreſs and grace with which the new pope acquitted himſelf of his taſk. The church ſeemed to grow young again, and to have a right, as well as Pius VI., to expect proſperous days.

It was ſhortly afterwards that the beauty of his perſon received an homage, to which the vicars of Jeſus Chriſt were not accuſtomed. While Pius VI. was paſſing through a ſtreet of Rome, carried along with a ſplendor ſuitable to his dignity, a voice was heard from one of the windows, which were crowded with curious ſpectators. It was that of a young woman: *quanto è bello! quanto è bello!* cried ſhe, in a moment of enthuſiaſm. An old woman, in haſte to correct any thing that might appear too profane in this exclamation, replied, with her hands joined, and her eyes lifted up towards heaven, *Tanto è bello quanto é ſanto!* It is ſaid, that ſuch a compliment gave Pius VI. more ſecret ſatisfaction than all the incenſe laviſhed upon him by the prelates at the altar, and all the genuflexions of the Sacred College.

We do not mean, however, that an inclination, common to many of the cardinals, was ever included in the charges brought againſt him during the courſe of his long pontificate. His very enemies, if not altogether unjuſt, muſt confeſs that he has always been irreproachable as to purity of morals. In the early days which he paſſed at Rome, ambition made him ſeek the ſociety of a lady of high rank, and of a very intriguing diſpoſition, who was ſuppoſed to poſſeſs conſiderable influence. This was madame Falconieri, mother of the young lady, afterwards ducheſs of Braſchi. He was indebted to her for his firſt ſucceſs in his eccleſiaſtical career. But madame Falconieri, though worthy of attention as a patroneſs, had nothing that could make her deſirable as a miſtreſs. Braſchi viſited her for a ſhort time, kept away as ſoon as he had obtained the only favour he expected from her; and was ſolely indebted for the reputation, which he acquired in theſe latter times, of being mademoiſelle Falconieri's father, to the ill-humour of his ſubjects, and to his blind partiality for her after ſhe became his niece.

During the time that he was treaſurer of the Apoſtolical Chamber, that is to ſay, from 1766 to 1773, he was remarkable for his conſtant application to buſineſs, for his contempt of worldly pleaſures, and for the regularity of

his

his conduct; which procured him general eſteem. He did not forfeit this character during his cardinalate, which laſted only two years; and when he was ſeated in St. Peter's chair, excepting indeed the duplicity of which he was ſuſpected, and which the embarraſſment of circumſtances ſeemed to render excuſable, he was free from all ſerious reproach. Since his elevation to the papacy, his defects, which he had either concealed, or had had no opportunity of developing, have excited a great deal of hatred; but calumny, which has not ſpared him, has ſcarcely ever attacked him upon the ſcore of his morals. Gorani is, perhaps, the only one who treats him as ill in that reſpect as in every other. He throws ſuſpicions upon the motives of the affection which cardinal Ruffo manifeſted for him in his youth; he pretends that it was not ambition alone which led to his connexion with madame Falconieri; and he even inſinuates, that gallantry was one of the principal means of his elevation to the papal throne. It is in fact of no great conſequence whether theſe charges be founded or not. The ſalvation of Pius VI. may be much concerned; but his glory is very little intereſted in his having faithfully practiſed one of the firſt Chriſtian virtues. It is a duty, however, that we owe to truth, to affirm, that thoſe who have known him long, and well, never perceived any thing that could give riſe to the ſmalleſt doubt as to the purity of his morals, at leaſt from the time in which he was appointed treaſurer, to the end of his pontificate. If the amorous connexions of a temporal ſovereign cannot eſcape the vigilance of his numerous attendants, how can a pope, all whoſe ſteps and moments are counted, conceal himſelf from the nice obſervation of the conſcientious, or from the keen eye of malignity; and cover his ſecret intrigues with an impenetrable veil? Pius VI. divided all his time between his religious duties, his cloſet, and the library of the Vatican. He went out very ſeldom, and never without company. He had no taſte for a country reſidence, nor even for thoſe innocent amuſements which the graveſt men allow themſelves as a relaxation after their labours. He paſſed the ſummer ſeaſon at the Quirinal palace, and the reſt of the year at the Vatican. His only recreation was the viſit which he paid almoſt every year to the Pontine marſhes. Conſtantly taken up with ſerious occupations, or the duties of his office, he avoided, inſtead of ſeeking, the ſociety of women.

As pope, he could not then lead a more exemplary life; but as a man, and as a ſovereign, he no doubt expoſed himſelf to many and ſerious reproaches. An erroneous opinion had been formed of him in many reſpects. When rendered more conſpicuous by his eminent ſtation, he ſoon diſcovered a great ignorance of worldly affairs, particularly of politics; an obſtinacy which never yielded to a direct attack; and an invincible attachment to certain prejudices, inſeparable perhaps from his profeſſion, but of which he neither ſuſpected the inconvenience nor the danger. This we ſhall have frequent opportunities of obſerving in the courſe of theſe Memoirs. He entertained the moſt favourable idea of his own capacity. Rather headſtrong than firm, he was conſtantly undoing what he had done; and this mixture of vanity and weakneſs was attended with two ſerious inconveniences. What was no more than inconſiſtency, and want of reſolution, was taken for duplicity. Coldly affable he never felt a real affection for any one; nor ever knew what it was completely to unboſom himſelf, unleſs when fear rendered him communicative.

Out of the five cardinals, who were ſucceſſively his ſecretaries of ſtate, there was not one who could flatter himſelf with having enjoyed his entire confidence. He granted it, but ſtill under certain reſtrictions, to Gerdyl and Antonelli, two other cardinals; conſulting them ſolely about matters in which he thought he could derive advantage from their talents.

Haſty, impetuous, and ſometimes even paſſionate, he required to be curbed by fear, or ſoothed by affectionate language, which indicated an attachment to his intereſt, without hurting his pride. Cardinal de Bernis ſaid of him, towards the end of the year 1777, *I watch over him inceſſantly, as over a child of an excellent diſpoſition; but too full of ſpirits, and capable of throwing itſelf out of the window if left a moment alone.*

That excellent diſpoſition was afterwards in great meaſure ſpoiled by adulation, the poſſeſſion of power, and the want of ſomebody bold enough to tell him the truth, or inclined to take the trouble. Faults gradually manifeſtly themſelves, that the moſt clear-ſighted had not even ſuſpected. His long pontificate was, beſides, a grievance which neither the cardinals nor the people of Rome could pardon him. In ſhort a concurrence of unlucky circumſtances, to which he knew

not

not how to accommodate himſelf, added to his improvidence and to his vanity, the principal ſource of his prodigality, and of his taſte for brilliant, but expenſive enterpriſes, rendered him in the end more odious than many princes who have been really wicked. One of his operations alone will find favour with poſterity, and even immortaliſe his name, although infected with that principal fault which manifeſted itſelf in every thing, and which was not one of the ſmalleſt cauſes of his ſorrows: this is the draining, which he at leaſt began, of the Pontine marſhes.

CHAPTER VII.

The draining of the Pontine Marſhes.

OF all the enterpriſes of Pius VI., that to which he conſtantly attached the higheſt importance, and which will throw a luſtre upon his pontificate, even in the eyes of the ſevereſt judges, is the draining of the Pontine marſhes. It alternately procured his vanity gratifications and diſappointments; and was the theme of pompous panegyrics and bitter ſarcaſms. It is connected with the proſperity and ſalubrity of Italy. The expenſes attendant on it occaſioned the exhauſtion of the papal treaſury, and the murmurs of the Roman people; and thus paved the way for a revolution. It therefore deſerves ſome mention *.

The Appian way, *Via Appia*, famous in hiſtory on account of the era of its conſtruction, and the name of its founder, and rendered ſtill more illuſtrious by ſo many triumphal proceſſions; that road, of which the ruins, ſurviving the ravages of time, would alone ſuffice to give an idea

* We have borrowed the greateſt part of theſe details from a work upon Italy, publiſhed in German, by Doctor Meyer, a Hamburgher, equally reſpectable for his talents and virtues. This work appeared at Berlin in 1792, under the title of *Darſtellungen aus Italien*.

idea of the Romans and of their public works, paſſed through the country which has ſince been called the Pontine marſhes. The origin of their exiſtence is loſt in oblivion. Two rivers, the *Amaſenus* and the *Ufens*, which have preſerved their ancient names to the preſent day, appear to have been, by their overflowing, the firſt cauſe of the deſolation to which this country has been condemned, whenever the careleſſneſs of the government has ceaſed to call the guardian hand of induſtry to its aſſiſtance. From that part of the Apennines which borders upon the ancient Campania, and at the foot of which is a large valley extending to the ſea, run a great number of ſtreams, large and ſmall, that find inexhauſtible ſources in the ſummits and ſides of that chain of mountains. Their union forms ſeveral rivers, the beds of which being conſtantly filled up by the mud that the water brings down with it, cannot contain the abundant tribute they receive, eſpecially in the rainy ſeaſon. They then ſwell, overflow, and cover the plain, which is on a level with their banks. Some of theſe torrents run off into the loweſt parts of the valley, and there form immenſe ponds, abounding with fiſh.

Such is the permanent cauſe of the tendeney of this country to degenerate into a moraſs; ſuch are the obſtacles which the Romans, during the ſplendid period of the republic, had conſtantly to overcome, and over which they conſtantly triumphed.

A colony of Spartans, diſguſted with the ſeverity of the laws of Lycurgus, quitted Lacedæmon, and, after a long and dangerous navigation, landed upon this coaſt. Finding it a fertile country, they ſettled there, and, according to the cuſtom of thoſe ſuperſtitious times, dedicated a temple, a ſacred wood, and ſeveral fountains, to an unknown goddeſs, whom they were pleaſed to call *Feronia;* and whoſe worſhip and altars have been immortaliſed in the verſes of Horace †.

By the care of this induſtrious colony, the country which they had peaceably conquered was rapidly peopled, and attained a high degree of cultivation. It is the country of the Volſci, who made ſo great a figure during the robuſt infancy of the Roman republic; and it was for a long time one

† Ora manuſque tuâ lavimus, FERONIA, lymphâ.

Lib. I. Sat. V.

one of its principal granaries. But towards the time when Rome was in its greateſt ſplendour, this diſtrict, deſolated by inundations, was indiſcriminately denominated the Pontine country, and the Pontine marſhes (*ager Pontinus, palus Pontinus*); the three and twenty cities, which formerly embelliſhed its ſurface, no longer exiſting but in the remembrance of the Romans. The principal families of Rome, however, eſtabliſhed in ſuch cantons, as the elevation of the ground, and the efforts of induſtry, preſerved from the ravages of the ſtagnant water, thoſe country-ſeats, the beauty and fertility of which were celebrated by the Roman poets.

About three centuries before the Chriſtian era, Appius Claudius, the cenſor, ſurnamed the Blind, ſtood forward as the firſt reſtorer of this country. He carried acroſs the moraſs the road which bears his name, and of which the magnificence was never equalled. Among other monuments, it offered to the eye thoſe tombs which ſuggeſted to the mind of the penſive traveller this philoſophical thought. *Thoſe who repoſe here once lived, and, like thee, were mortal.*

It was not, however, till a century and a half after the making of the Appian way, that Cornelius Cethegus, the conſul, undertook to drain the Pontine marſhes. Tranſient and impotent efforts! Julius Cæſar found this country a prey to new deſolation. Covetous of every kind of glory, he was about to reſtore it to fertility; when a premature death prevented him from executing the arduous taſk.

Auguſtus undertook it. It was he who cut, along the Appian way, a canal which was deſtined to receive the ſtagnant water, and to afford it an outlet; and which ſerved alſo for the purpoſes of navigation, and for the conveyance of travellers †. This was the canal on which Horace embarked with Mecœnas, on his way from Rome to Brunduſium; and of which he ſeaſons his deſcription with the ſalt of his ſatirical humour.

Trajan appeared next in the liſt of the improvers of this fatal country; but he confined himſelf to the reparation and embelliſhment of the Appian way, and to the making of another road which bears his name.‡

Near

† See the map annexed to this volume.
‡ See the map.

Near three centuries afterwards, during the memorable reign of Theodoric I., king of the Goths in Italy, the Pontine marſhes re-appeared in all their horror. Let us liſten to that prince himſelf, while deſcribing them to the Roman ſenate, through the medium of the illuſtrious Caſſiodorus, his miniſter, in the poetical ſtile of thoſe barbarous times— "Thoſe moraſſes," ſays he, "of which the inimical fury "lays waſte the neighbouring country; over which the ir- "reſiſtible violence of the water extends itſelf like a ſea; "and, invading the country far and near, deſolates with "its dreadful inundations the moſt delightful plains; de- "forms their beauteous face by converting them into de- "ſerts; and diſgraces a ſoil, which, being ſtripped of its "fruits by the floods, no longer affords any uſeful produc- "tion, ſince it is left a prey to the ravages of the ſtagnant "water. Let us admire": adds he, "the enterpriſing "boldneſs of paſt times revived in one of our contempora- "ries, who has juſt attempted alone what the united powers "of the ſtate did not dare to undertake." He meant a rich patrician of the name of *Decius*, who was in fact inveſted with the ſole charge of draining theſe marſhes, and to whom Theodoric abandoned the property of the plains he was about to render fertile, "becauſe," ſaid he, "it is "juſt that every one ſhould enjoy the fruit of his labours." An inſcription found near Terracina proves that the efforts of Decius were crowned with ſome ſucceſs.

But after him, time, powerfully ſeconded by the ravages of war, and by the neglect of the ruling powers, reſumed its rights over a country, devoted by turns to the charms of a luxuriant cultivation, and to the devaſtation occaſioned by the mercileſs floods. The popes, who firſt eſtabliſhed their temporal authority in the Roman ſtate, had neither ſufficient activity, knowledge, nor treaſure; three things of which the union alone can give birth to the miracles of induſtry. Several ſovereign pontiffs, however, endeavoured to ſignalize their reign by bold attempts. Boniface VIII., Martin V., Leo X., and particularly Sextus V., whoſe energetic character reminds us, in many reſpects, of the ſplendid days of Rome, were ambitious of this kind of glory, and not without ſucceſs. The traces of two canals are ſtill to be ſeen, which might have been reſtored at a ſmall expenſe to their ancient deſtination; and of which the names (*Rio Martino* and *Fiume Siſto*) denote the pontiffs by whom they were cut.

Their indolent ſucceſſors ſuffered theſe noble works to go to ruin. From time to time ſome of them were tempted to reſume them; but of what uſe are tranſient whims in enterpriſes which require a ſtrong and conſtant volition? Projects were formed; maps were drawn; and the advice was taken of Dutch engineers, as the moſt ſkilful in Europe in works of the kind. In theſe latter times, ſome Italians alſo preſented plans for draining land, which were ſlightly inveſtigated, and then laid upon the ſhelf. In the mean time the cauſe of the ravages kept operating ſlowly, but without interruption; and when Pius VI. ſucceeded to the papal throne, the Pontine marſhes, after two centuries of neglect, were in the moſt horrible ſtate. To reſtore to cultivation and ſalubrity the vaſt extent of ground which they covered, was an enterpriſe that might have diſmayed a man of common intrepidity; but his courage was ſupported by the idea of the glory about to be attached to his name; or rather it was nothing but that ſame love of extraordinary things, in which the little good he has done, and all the errors he is expiating, originated. Immediately after his acceſſion, he went to viſit that deſolate country. He ſhuddered, when, from the top of a hill which commands a view of it, he ſaw at his feet the deep ravages of time, and of the inundations, the peſtiferous fogs, which extended far and wide, and the dangers which even threatened his ſacred perſon, ſhould he dare to tread the unſolid ground. He conceived from that moment the project of beginning by making a ſafe road, and building great bridges over the abyſs, in order to ſecure to himſelf the means of croſſing it at leaſt without danger. He next turned his attention to the great operation of draining. It is at the port of Aſtura, where Cicero was decapitated, and where the unfortunate Conradin fell, thirteen centuries after, into the hands of his cruel conqueror, that theſe marſhes begin. They extend along the coaſt as far as Terracina, upon the confines of the kingdom of Naples; and in ſome places advance a great way into the interior of the country. They would long ago have poiſoned the air of Rome, if the peſtilential vapours they exhale had not been ſtopped by the foreſts which ſhelter the cities of Ciſterna and Sermonnetta.

At the beginning of a reign, the attention of every one is awake, and every hope is alive; a proſpect opens which admits the indulgence of diſtant ſpeculations; and vanity, ambition,

ambition, and adulation, are eager to ſecond the views of the ſovereign. Thoſe of Pius VI. were forwarded by his new ſubjects. He eſtabliſhed a bank, under the name of *Monte dei Marecagi*, to receive the funds deſtined for this enterpriſe; and in a little time the voluntary ſubſcriptions carried thither amounted to 120,000 Roman crowns. Bolognini, one of thoſe whoſe plans had been preſented under the pontificate of Clement XIII., was immediately put at the head of the undertaking; and in 1777, Sani, an able ſurveyor, was charged to draw a plan of the ground, and to indicate the ſpots, in which the works might be begun with the greateſt probability of ſucceſs.

The firſt thing diſcovered under the mud was an ancient aqueduct, which formerly ſupplied the city of Terracina with water; and which was repaired at little expenſe. The famous Appian way was next cleared of the ſtrata of earth under which it lay buried; and that maſter-piece of Roman magnificence, paved entirely with blocks of lava, and leading acroſs the whole country, which ſeparates Rome from Capua, was reſtored to the light of day, and to the traveller; but not without conſiderable pains and expenſe. Appius Claudius, better verſed in hydraulics than his ſucceſſors, was ſenſible that a road carried through the midſt of ſtagnant water ought not much to exceed their ordinary level. No doubt, at the time of great inundations, the Appian way, thus conſtructed, was momentarily overflowed; but its ſmall degree of elevation ſerved at leaſt to favour the running off of the water towards the ſea. Thoſe who came after him remedied an inconvenience which laſted only a few hours, and, by heightening the ſurface of the road, rendered it more conſtantly paſſable; but they created a much more ſerious inconvenience. The road thus raiſed five or ſix feet by Trajan, and ſeveral feet more by king Theodoric, four centuries afterwards, was interſected at certain intervals by arches, under which the water that came from the Apennines found a paſſage to the ſea. Thoſe arches being choked up, from want of proper care, the water, which at the time of the inundations uſed to paſs ſo freely over the old road, found itſelf confined by the kind of dyke that improvidence had raiſed; remained ſtagnant; diffuſed itſelf; and roſe to a higher level; and thus the miſchief, meant to be remedied; only grew worſe and worſe. It was at its height when Pius VI. undertook to attack it

at its ſource. The ſucceſſive *ſtrata* of ſtones, which had been laid upon the work of the ancient Romans, were firſt demoliſhed by dint of labour; the dates of their conſtruction, and the names of their authors, appearing by inſcriptions, which both time and the water had ſpared. At length the old Appian way was diſcovered. It was found to be ſtill furrowed with deep ruts, made by the carriages of the Romans in the time of the republic, and perhaps alſo by their triumphal cars; ſacred traces, which awakened the moſt ſublime recollections. It was on this revered foundation that Pius VI. made the new road, which was carried as far as Terracina, the laſt town of his dominions towards the ſouth, and which the court of Naples continued to the celebrated city of Capua. In 1786 this noble road was completely finiſhed, was open for paſſengers, and conſtituted one of the principal embelliſhments of modern Italy.

While this magnificent work was in hand, orders were given to cut through the moraſs a wide canal, which was to terminate in the lake of Fogliano; a lake ſeparated from the coaſt by a narrow tongue of land. Thouſands of hands were employed in theſe labours, and not without ſucceſs. As early as the month of October 1778, a piece of land, of eighty *rubbie*, was recovered from the ſtagnant water; and in the following year was fit for cultivation.

The firſt enthuſiaſm of the Romans, however, had ſubſided, and began in that very year to give place to murmurs. The voluntary ſubſcriptions falling far ſhort of the expenſe, the undertaking could not be carried on without burdenſome loans; and did not appear to be attended with the ſucceſs anſwerable to ſuch ruinous efforts. It was decryed. The ill-humour that the pope thence conceived ſerved only to confirm him in his projects; and ſometimes gave occaſion to ſcenes characteriſtic of his iraſcible, but juſt and benevolent diſpoſition. In the courſe of the above year a prieſt of Terracina, a good eccleſiaſtic, but a bad courtier, repaired to Rome to ſolicit a prebend. He had juſt paſſed through a country which occupied the pontiff's attention, and could give him certain and recent information on the ſubject. In anſwer to the queſtions of his holineſs, he bluntly told him that the draining made no progreſs, and that the ſums expended upon it were ſo much *money thrown away*. "*Money thrown away!*" replied the pope, in a rage.

"You

"You are an inſolent fellow: what, do you come to brave me in my very palace?" This was a clap of thunder to the poor prieſt. He fainted away; was carried to his apartments; and, when he recovered his ſenſes, thought that he had nothing better to do than to return with all ſpeed to Terracina. His deſpair was great: inſtead of his prebend, he had nothing to carry back but the malediction of the holy father. But what was his aſtoniſhment, when on a ſudden he ſaw the pope's chamberlain enter, and deliver to him not only the grant of the prebend, but alſo an order to wait upon his holineſs without delay. This ſecond interview was leſs ſtormy than the former; and was no doubt more uſeful to the pope. He derived information from it by which he profited.

But what can human perſeverance effect, when oppoſed by the caprices of the elements? Towards the end of 1779, a dreadful inundation deſtroyed all the works; ſwallowed up the enormous ſums they had already coſt; and juſtified the unfavourable prediction of the prieſt of Terracina. Nobody knew how to communicate to the pope this fatal intelligence. It reached him diſguiſed, and weakened; but it was ſtill ſufficiently alarming to inſpire him with a deſire of repairing to the ſpot in order to eſtimate the miſchief, and to preſcribe a remedy.

It was a thing extremely uncommon to ſee a pope abſent himſelf from his ſee. From Benedict XIII, who, in 1727, went as far as Benevento, no pontiff had been known to make a longer excurſion than to Caſtel-Gondolfo, which is only at a few miles diſtance from Rome. Pius VI. was ſcarcely recovered from a very ſerious fit of illneſs. His phyſicians, his darling nephew, count Oneſti, and his courtiers particularly, endeavoured to diſſuade him from the execution of his project: but he perſiſted in it, and ſet off, on the 5th of April 1780, with a very ſmall retinue. This proof of his taſte for ſimplicity, and of his averſion for uſeleſs luxury, inſtead of procuring him the praiſe he was entitled to, ſerved only to render him the object of ſarcaſms. His economy was conſtrued into meanneſs; his abſtinence from pomp into a want of dignity. The ſovereign pontiff, the vicar of Jeſus Chriſt, was, as one of our modern poets ſay, *condemned to magnificence*. What unaccountable injuſtice! We firſt deify men, and then impute it to them as a crime, if, when ſurrounded with pageantry and adulation, they

they conſider themſelves as demi-gods at leaſt. But let us follow Pius VI. in his journey.

He would not allow the cardinal de Bernis to accompany him, even to his biſhopric of Albano, ten miles diſtant from Rome. His obſequious eminence obeyed; but as he had already diſcovered the taſte which the pope endeavoured to conceal under the veil of modeſty, Pius VI. found, on his arrival at Albano, inſcriptions with which he permitted his vanity to be flattered. At Veletri, where he ſlept the firſt night, cardinal Albani, dean of the Sacred college, beſides the incenſe of inſcriptions, laviſhed on him another kind of homage, to which he was far from being inſenſible. It conſiſted of ſome effects of great value, that had juſt deſcended to him by inheritance. On leaving Veletri, he was accompanied by a ſquadron of cuiraſſiers as far as Terracina, where he was to ſtop. The neighbouring towns ſent detachments of ſoldiers, to prevent the diſorders that might have been occaſioned by an immenſe crowd of people, attracted by curioſity from all parts of the eccleſiaſtical ſtate, as well as of the kingdom of Naples. During the few days which he paſſed at Terracina, he occupied the modeſt habitation of a private individual. Thence he went to viſit the Pontine marſhes, which are only at a few miles diſtance; and there he diſpatched the ordinary buſineſs of the ſtate, which admitted of no delay. Important affairs were poſtponed till his return.

After a journey which laſted in all twelve days, he returned to Rome exceedingly well ſatisfied. According to the cuſtom obſerved with all ſovereigns, both great and ſmall, ſuch parts only of the works that he went to ſee were ſhewn to him as were calculated to inſpire him with brilliant hopes. He was even told, that in a year his great enterpriſe would be completed; and, by his orders, gold and ſilver medals were diſtributed to the workmen. He was deſirous that every heart ſhould partake of his joy. On his way out and home he travelled with pleaſure along that noble road, which, ſince its re-eſtabliſhment under his auſpices, had changed its name from *Via Appia* to *Via Pia*; that road which ſtill attracts the admiration of travellers, and which is perhaps the only thing really uſeful that has reſulted from ſuch a world of pains and expenſe. From that very time it was foreſeen that the complete draining of the marſhes would be impoſſible, becauſe the water which covered them

was

was lower than the ſea, and becauſe it was fed by the ſtreams that flowed inceſſantly from the neighbouring mountains. To obviate this difficulty, Pius VI. ordered a new canal to be cut. Always aiming at brilliant enterpriſes inſtead of uſeful undertakings, he conceived while upon the ſpot the idea of building a new city, in the midſt of the land recovered from the water. A plan of it was drawn under his own inſpection. This city, which was to contain ten thouſand families, was to be a perfect ſquare, interſected by a large canal intended to receive the water of all the neighbouring ſtreams. The canal itſelf was to fall into the ſea, after having in its courſe favoured exportation and inland trade. The poverty of the Apoſtolical Chamber obliged Pius VI. to defer this project to better times. On his return he viſited the lake of Fogliano, and the quarries of marble recently diſcovered in a mountain upon the coaſt; and went alſo to ſee what progreſs was making in the ſumptuous buildings he was adding to the abbey of Subiaco. He was poſſeſſed of it before he arrived at the pontifical throne; and every thing that was nearly or diſtantly connected with it was to be embelliſhed or enriched. He was conſtructing there a ſuperb church, a ſeminary, and a palace; ſplendid, but uſeleſs and expenſive works, which added not a little to the diſtreſs of the Roman finances, and which already indicated his ruinous taſte for magnificence and ſhow.

During this journey many ſumptuous ruins were ſhewn to him, which appeared to have belonged to the ancient city of Sueſſa-Pometia, and to the ſumptuous edifices which formerly embelliſhed the Appian way. Among theſe ruins had been found fragments of antique ſtatues, inſcriptions, bas-reliefs, and articles of furniture; ſome mutilated by time, others not at all disfigured. The pope immediately gave orders to collect theſe precious relics, and to reſerve them for the muſeum of the city it was his intention to found.

But Pius VI. never experienced any ſatisfaction unmixed with alloy. Unlucky accidents, or at leaſt ſtrong apprehenſions, conſtantly obtruded themſelves upon his joys, or diſturbed his repoſe. Scarcely was he returned from the Pontine marſhes, when he learned that the court of Naples envied him the brilliant fruit of his ſolicitude, and his principal claim to glory. The marquis della Sambucca, who,

who, without having inherited the marquis di Tanucci's ill-will to the Holy See, had at that time perſonal reaſons of complaint againſt Pius VI., was engaged, it was ſaid, in drawing up a ſtate paper, in which a great part of the Pontine marſhes, and of the city of Terracina, was claimed as the property of the kingdom of Naples. Envy already ſaw, with uneaſineſs, a country, ſo cloſely bordering upon that kingdom, arrived at a high degree of cultivation; the miſerable inhabitants of Abruzzo, led away by the attractions of this new Eden; a magnificent city riſing in the midſt of marſhes; and the port of Terracina affording a ſafe ſhelter to ſmall veſſels, and rivalling that of Naples. This ſtate paper actually appeared, and threw the pope into great conſternation. He found ſome conſolation, however, in the heart of the cardinal de Bernis; often his ſevere cenſor, but always his friend. The pontifical archives were immediately ſearched, in order to procure materials for a complete refutation. Theſe efforts of erudition, which would have been of no avail againſt the execution of a plan ſeriouſly in agitation, were in the preſent caſe uſeleſs; the malignity of the Neapolitan miniſter being ſatisfied, for this time, with the agonies into which he had thrown the holy father.

The uneaſy jealouſy of the court of Naples was, after all, premature; for the brilliant chimeras of Pius VI. were very far from being realiſed. Shortly after his return, ſeveral perſons, among others the duke de Grimaldi, then Spaniſh ambaſſador, went to pay a viſit to the Pontine marſhes, and informed him on their return, no doubt in a lamentable tone, that the execution of his magnificent project was conſidered as impracticable. "The hidden ſprings never ceaſed to flow; and the bottom of the marſh was decidedly lower than the level of the ſea. The part adjacent to the mountains promiſed an abundant harveſt; but the oppoſite ſide was doomed to remain for ever under water." There might be ſome exaggeration in theſe alarming accounts; but the truth was, that the works had not by a great deal anſwered the brilliant expectations of the preceding year. Eighteen hundred men were conſtantly employed; but peſtilential vapours had ſpread among them an epidemical diſeaſe; and the heavy rains had cauſed conſiderable inundations. The ſeed was buried, and lay rotting under water. The proprietors of the land, deceived in

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their ſpeculations, applied to the Apoſtolical Chamber for indemnity; proved that the ſluices intended as drains were not conſtructed according to the rules of art; and attributed their loſſes to the unſkilfulneſs of the engineers.

The eye of the maſter being deemed neceſſary a ſecond time, Pius VI. repaired again to the ſpot, in order to inveſtigate theſe evils, and, if poſſible, to apply a remedy. He arrived at Terracina; and inſtead of receiving the tribute of gratitude, heard nothing but murmurs and complaints. Full of the objects which he had before his eyes, he wrote to Pallavicini, the ſecretary of ſtate, that he was reſolved that the great work, which he had ſo much at heart, ſhould in future be carried on with greater activity. But there was a want of money; and it could only be ſupplied by an increaſe of taxes, which provoked complaints of another kind. The pontiff was ſurrounded by rocks; and whatever courſe he ſteered was ſure to excite diſcontent, and to feel the ſame ſentiment himſelf.

But what could he ſee, what could he determine upon with due deliberation, in journeys ſo rapidly performed? At the end of a few days he returned to Rome with ſuch celerity, that his phyſician was alarmed for his health. Pius VI. alledged, as an excuſe, the intereſts of ſo many religious ſocieties, which would ſuffer by his abſence; that of the generals of orders; and that of the whole catholic world, which ſtood ſo much in need of his paternal ſolicitude. Sovereigns, merely temporal, find it ſo difficult to fulfil their immenſe taſk! What then is to be expected from thoſe who are bound to attend equally to the affairs of heaven, and to thoſe of the earth?

The works at the Pontine marſhes went on, nevertheleſs, and the hopes of the pope began to revive, when another inundation, in 1783, gave him new alarm. He undertook a third journey thither, and found that the ravages of the water had been exaggerated. Vicar of the divinity on earth, he ſeemed to think that his preſence re-eſtabliſhed order among the elements, or that, like another Neptune, a *quos ego* from his mouth ſufficed to overawe the waves. He ſet off diſcouraged, and almoſt in deſpair; he came back re-aſſured and contented. In the following year (1784) he alſo made a journey of a fortnight to the Pontine marſhes, and brought back with him the ſame confidence as to the ſucceſs of his plan; but he was not yet at the end of his troubles.

bles. Not only cenſure, through the medium of Paſquin, laviſhed the moſt cruel ſarcaſms upon his darling enterpriſe; but the very perſons who were the moſt attached to him endeavoured to diſſuade him from it. In 1785, cardinal Orſini, having croſſed the Pontine marſhes on his return from Naples, afflicted him with the moſt diſcouraging objections. Foreigners, more impartial in their obſervations, were equally liberal of their criticiſm upon this favourite offspring of his vanity. An Engliſh traveller expreſſed himſelf thus in 1787: † "The execution of this plan has been ill managed; experience having proved that there is not a ſufficient declivity to carry off the water. After ten years labour there is not ſo much land drained as there was in the time of Auguſtus; and the air is become ſtill more unwholeſome. Beſides, is there not in the eccleſiaſtical ſtate more good land than its population (2,200,000 ſouls) can cultivate? With half the money a much more advantageous reſult might have been obtained. Works ſo long and ſo expenſive have produced no advantage but the re-eſtabliſhment of the Appian way, which for a tenth part of the ſum might have been completely reſtored."

The judicious Archenholtz, in his work concerning Italy, expreſſes himſelf with ſtill greater ſeverity. He applauds the undertaking in itſelf, but conſiders the means as very inadequate, and the reſult as very unſatisfactory. According to him, the wages of the workmen are too ſmall; their habitations are miſerable huts, where, almoſt as naked as ſavages, and as pale and livid as ghoſts, they go to reſt themſelves after their dangerous labours. This project, conceived by the pope with the beſt intention, became, in the hands of the Apoſtolical Chamber, which preſided over its execution, one of thoſe ruinous puerilities, with which it dazzled the vulgar, and ſatiated its own thirſt of gold.

But all theſe criticiſms, and all this oppoſition which he met with from human paſſions, and from the elements, did not diſcourage Pius VI. The ſpring of 1787 ſaw him appear again in the ſuppoſed theatre of his glory. This time he convinced himſelf with his own eyes of the ravages occaſioned by the inundations. His favorite nephew, the

† This Engliſh author is ſo vaguely indicated, that it has not been poſſible to diſcover the original text: it has therefore been neceſſary to re-tranſlate the tranſlation.

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duke di Nemi, who was in poſſeſſion of a part of the drained land, on ſeeing the unfortunate reſult of ſo much labour, endeavoured to prevail upon him to deſiſt. The undertaking had already coſt a million of Roman crowns. All the money he could command was already exhauſted; but not ſo the perſeverance, or, more properly ſpeaking, the obſtinacy of the holy father. The work was continued, but with great tardineſs, and upon a ſcale proportioned to the ſmallneſs of his reſources. In vain did the project-makers, particularly one Muller, who had the ſuperintendance of the cuſtom-houſe and the tolls, deviſe new ones. They only ſerved to irritate the impoveriſhed ſubject, and to render the ſovereign odious, without producing the means of defraying ſuch an enormous expenſe. In ſhort, after ſo much anxiety, and after twelve years labour, the whole country, extending from Ciſterna to Terracina, was no more than a frightful and peſtilential moraſs, except a few ſpots of ground reſtored to cultivation, a handſome road, and a canal, which bears the name of *Linea Pia.*

The following year was witneſs to another journey to the Pontine marſhes, and to new pecuniary efforts for the carrying on of the works. Under the pretence of ſecuring a part at leaſt of the treaſures of our lady of Loretto from the plundering hands of the Algerines, bars of ſilver, of the value of 400,000 Roman crowns, were taken thence, and carried to the Apoſtolical Chamber; which paid the *Santa Caſa* intereſt at three and a half per cent. A large portion of this ſum was ſaid to have been expended on the marſhes; in other words, was, in the public opinion, as good as thrown away; for malevolence was more and more buſy in decrying the enterpriſe. *Sono andate alle pal.. di Pontine* (they are gone to the Pontine marſhes), was a proverb current throughout the Roman ſtate, when any one wiſhed to ſpeak of ſums of money expended in extravagant ſchemes.

In paſſing through the ſtreets of Rome, Pius VI. often heard himſelf called *il ſeccatore* †, a nick-name of a double meaning; alluding at once to his rage for *drying up* the marſhes, and to the inconvenience ſuffered by the people upon that account. In ſhort, he derived nothing but maledictions and ſarcaſms from the only operation which ought to have thrown a luſtre upon his pontificate. In the eyes

† From *ſeccare* to dry. A ſtupid thing or troubleſome fellow, in vulgar Engliſh *a bore*, is in Italian converſation called *una ſeccatura.* T.

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of his ſubjects it was no more than a folly of which they were obliged to pay the expenſe, and by which they profited little; foreigners alone enjoying the fruit of ſo much labour, and ſuch immenſe ſums of money. When they travelled along the noble Appian way, reſtored by Pius VI., they did not ſee the treaſures ſwallowed up by the ſurrounding marſhes; they did not ſee the multitude of wretches who had died a lingering death, victims to the peſtilential vapours that exhaled from them. They applauded the brilliant reſult of theſe laborious and dangerous works as we admire the aſtoniſhing pyramids of Egypt, without thinking of the myriads of ſlaves employed in their conſtruction, or as the giddy multitude admires ſome ſplendid *fête*, given by a rich man embarraſſed in his affairs, where the company enjoy themſelves, and the manager triumphs, while his needy creditors are burſting with rage.

The principal end of this undertaking, that of purifying the air, is far from having been attained. Travellers tremble while driving the ſix poſts and a half, that theſe marſhes extend along the Appian way, particularly the firſt that occurs on leaving Terracina. Nothing, however, announces the danger that environs them. It is true that the brilliant verdure, of which they have an extenſive proſpect on either hand, conſiſts of little elſe than ruſhes, which occupy almoſt the whole of the ſpace that is not covered with timber or bruſh-wood; and from this ſingle indication they eaſily divine that they are travelling acroſs a moraſs. But at the ſame time the horizon ſeems as ſerene as in the reſt of Italy, and the air appears as free from vapours as in the moſt ſalubrious country. They only perceive at a diſtance the ridge of the Apennines covered with clouds, pretty much as the ſummits of high mountains generally are; but woful expèrience ought to put them upon their guard againſt theſe deceitful appearances. It is impoſſible for them to drive with too much ſpeed through this diſtrict, where death ſeems to have eſtabliſhed his empire. They ought above all to avoid paſſing the Pontine marſhes by night, or even at its approach. Woe to him who cloſes his eyes during this dangerous journey: he runs a great riſk of never opening them again. The livid countenances of thoſe, whom want, or habit, confines to this ſpot, ſufficiently atteſt its unhealthineſs. Their languiſhing exiſtence is little elſe than death more or leſs prolonged. Hence it

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it is that ſcarcely any habitations are to be ſeen upon the road, except thoſe which are intended for the ſervice of the poſt. The wretches who occupy them inſpire a degree of compaſſion which it is difficult to conceal from them; and they themſelves are aware of the ſlightneſs of the thread on which their life depends. A few years ago a traveller perceiving a group of theſe animated ſpectres, aſked them, how they contrived *to live* in ſuch a country? *We die*, anſwered they. The traveller was ſtruck with this ſublime and mournful laconiſm; which will enable the reader to form a judgment of the country, of its inhabitants, and of the ſervices rendered to them by Pius VI.

However, while meaning to be humane and compaſſionate, let us take care not to be unjuſt. The making of a noble road between Rome and Naples is certainly of ſome advantage to the Romans, and to the inhabitants of part of the eccleſiaſtical ſtate; ſince, by facilitating the communication between the two largeſt cities in Italy, it is calculated to vivify the intermediate country. Before the reſtoration of the Appian way, there was no going from one to the other without taking a circuitous route through Foglia, aſcending the ſides of the Appennines, and afterwards deſcending to Terracina, by Sermoneta and Piperno.

But, as to that part of the magnificent plan adopted by Pius VI. which tended directly to an uſeful end, it muſt be confeſſed that the improvements were very defective. All the works were undertaken and paid for by the Apoſtolical Chamber, and the ſums of money appropriated to them were for the moſt part abandoned to the depredations of its agents. Some portions of the marſhes were, however, fitted for cultivation, and farmed out by the Apoſtolical Chamber to inhabitants, whom repeated inundations often obliged to apply for relief. Pius VI., little ſcrupulous as to the means of enriching his family, was almoſt the only one who profited by the clear produce of his expenſive undertaking. He had found means to form a handſome appanage for one of his nephews, out of the country recovered from the water; but this was only an additional grievance to his impoveriſhed ſubjects. The French republic avenged them by confiſcating that part of the land in queſtion which belonged to the duke di Nemi.

It has been calculated that the ſums employed in theſe vain attempts would have ſufficed to fertiliſe and reſtore to a flou-

a flouriſhing condition a great deal of ground in the eccleſiaſtical ſtate, which bears witneſs to the ſloth of its old government. Pius VI. ſacrificed uſeful undertakings to vain glory. Magnificent roads, bridges and palaces, decorated with his arms, and bearing his name, appeared more ſeductive to his vanity than fields covered with abundant crops. He has alſo left much to be done for the draining of the Pontine marſhes. Immediately after the occupation of the eccleſiaſtical ſtate by the republican troops, a company of Frenchmen undertook the completion of this buſineſs, but were obliged to relinquiſh it for want of the neceſſary funds. It will, no doubt, be one of the firſt undertakings of the new Roman government.

It remains to be ſaid, that this great enterpriſe was one of the principal cauſes of the ruin of the Roman finances. Their diſorder, when Pius VI. obtained the tiara, was already great. It was increaſed by that pontiff's avidity, by his taſte for oſtentation, and by his prodigality towards his nephews. Far from remedying the abuſes of an adminiſtration radically defective, he augmented them by his weakneſs and by his example. This is what we are about to develope in the following chapters.

CHAPTER VIII.

Vices of the Roman Adminiſtration; particularly that of Pius VI.

We ſhall not undertake to deſcribe in detail the form of the Roman government which has been recently deſtroyed. It will ſuffice to ſay, that no one was ever more complicated, nor was ever any one leſs anſwerable to the real end of all government, that of ruling mankind by the mere force of the laws, and of encouraging them, by rewards held out to induſtry, to labour for their own happineſs. It may, therefore, be ſaid without exaggeration, that no country was ever worſe adminiſtered than the eccleſiaſtical ſtate, eſpecially in theſe latter times. Pius VI. appeared at firſt to be ſenſible of its defects, and to have conceived the pro-

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ject of removing them. He appointed a congregation of cardinals, who were particularly enjoined to find a remedy for the diſorder of the finances; and to give the taxes a form leſs burdenſome to the ſtate, and leſs intolerable to individuals. He only felt an inclination to do good by ſtarts; and, though pretty much inclined to deſpotiſm, never had that ſtrong volition which ſometimes renders deſpots ſupportable, by impelling them to the performance of works of utility At the firſt aſpect of danger he diſplayed ſomething like courage; but was frightened as ſoon as he had leiſure to contemplate it. Obſtacles at firſt ſeemed only to ſtrengthen his reſolution; but he ſoon implored the aſſiſtance of Italian craft in order to evade them, or elſe undid all that he had done. He was particularly fearful of appearing to be governed; and yet he was often ſo; but it was rather through fear, with which he was eaſily inſpired, than by the aſcendancy of affectionate ſentiments, or by that of reaſon.

He began his reign, however, by ſeveral meaſures which ſeemed to indicate firmneſs, and a ſincere deſire to put an end to the diſorder of the finances. He even gave, in that department, a proof of ſeverity, which had well nigh involved him in a quarrel with the two crowns, whoſe friendſhip it was moſt his intereſt to cultivate. Scarcely had Clement XIV. cloſed his eyes, when Nicholas Biſchi, his relation and friend, whom he had placed at the head of the adminiſtration of proviſions, was ſuddenly called upon to give an account of the expenditure of 900,000 thouſand crowns, which he had received for the purpoſe of buying corn during a great ſcarcity. Pius VI. who had made a great parade of integrity during the time he was treaſurer, wiſhed to ſupport his reputation, by proſecuting without mercy an adminiſtrator ſuſpected of diſhoneſt conduct. He even manifeſted upon this occaſion a degree of animoſity, which made the French and Spaniſh miniſters accuſe him of perſecuting Biſchi leſs as a peculator than as the favourite of Clement XIV., and of wiſhing to bring an odium upon the government of that pontiff. Notwithſtanding the influence which the two miniſters already poſſeſſed in a variety of reſpects, Biſchi was obliged to ſtand a trial; the reſult of which was very unfavourable, ſince he was condemned to refund 242,000 crowns, though he produced vouchers for the expenditure of all the ſums intruſted to him, and had already

already given in his accounts to Clement XIV., by whom they had been approved. This ſentence was rather dictated by prejudice than by ſevere equity. It was particularly promoted by Livizzani, a furious partiſan of the Jeſuits, and an implacable enemy to any one who was hoſtile to their intereſts. Never, perhaps, did Pius VI. ſhew more tenacity than upon this occaſion. He obſtinately refuſed to grant Biſchi a reſpite of eight days, which he requeſted, in order to draw up a juſtification. In vain did the cardinal de Bernis, and the duke de Grimaldi, then Spaniſh ambaſſador, intercede in Biſchi's behalf. His ſentence was executed with the utmoſt rigour, and his property ſold much under its value, to make good the ſum he was bound to replace. The two miniſters of the houſe of Bourbon endeavoured at leaſt to make the prelate Livizzani expiate the indecent partiality with which he ſought to injure the memory of Clement XIV. But Livizzani was, nevertheleſs, promoted very ſhortly after to the legation of Urbino, and found his conduct upon this occaſion no impediment to his attainment of a cardinal's hat. All that the king of Spain could do in favour of Biſchi, who was more unfortunate than guilty, was to reſcue him from indigence, by granting him a penſion of 1500 Roman crowns.

But it was not long ere the zeal of Pius VI., for the proſecution of peculators, began to cool. From the very firſt years of his pontificate abuſes of every kind had made an alarming progreſs, and the people, deceived in almoſt all their hopes, began to murmur aloud. A general clamour aroſe, particularly againſt the Apoſtolical Chamber.

That name alone awakens the idea of the moſt incapable and moſt diſaſtrous adminiſtration. It is well known that it had the ſupreme direction of the finances in all their principal branches. It was leſs a miniſtry, than an aggregation of miniſters; who, under different titles, were charged to receive, to preſerve, to diſpenſe, and to defend, the public treaſure; and who moſt frequently, acquitted themſelves of theſe various functions with equal rapacity and ignorance. The firſt poſt in the Apoſtolical Chamber was held by the cardinal *Camerlingo*, who might be compared to the *quæſtors* of ancient Rome. His office was the firſt in modern Rome, and was ſtill more cloſely connected with the government of the church than of the ſtate. Its origin was as remote as the early times of Chriſtianity; and

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in rank it was only below the papal dignity. As ſoon as a ſovereign pontiff died, the cardinal Camerlingo took poſſeſſion of the honours of the papacy, and became a kind of regent: his authority, and the honours paid to him, laſting as long as the conclave. So eminent a place was calculated to give great influence to him who occupied it. It was conferred in the reign of Clement XIII. upon cardinal Rezzonico, who preſerved it during the two following pontificates to the moment of the Roman revolution. But the cardinal, unlike his brother, who had well nigh embroiled the church and a great part of Europe by means of his famous monitory againſt the duke of Parma, was of a mild and moderate diſpoſition; and though he was the nominal chief of the party of the *zelanti*, and ſo long occupied the firſt dignity at Rome, never poſſeſſed any great ſhare of influence.

The cardinal *Camerlingo* was then, properly ſpeaking, at the head of the Apoſtolical Chamber; and none of the edicts of that ſupreme council had any force, unleſs ſubſcribed with his name; but under cardinal Rezzonico this ſignature was little more than an empty formality.

Immediately under the *camerlingo*, was the *treaſurer*. Braſchi, during fifteen years, had filled this place; the moſt important in the pope's adminiſtration. The treaſurer poſſeſſed, rather in fact than by right, an almoſt abſolute authority over every thing relating to the impoſts. He had it in his power to abuſe this authority with impunity; which ſufficiently implies that it was frequently abuſed.

When the treaſurer conducted himſelf like an honeſt man, as it appears that Braſchi did, it is natural to ſuppoſe that malverſations were not common: but he was aſſiſted by three deputies, between whom the whole eccleſiaſtical ſtate was divided. It was among them particularly that obſtinacy was found united with unfeeling ignorance. They had a very ſmall ſalary; but they were ſo rapacious, and received ſo many preſents, that they ſoon acquired a ſcandalous opulence.

The treaſurer had immediately under him the commiſſary of the Apoſtolical Chamber. He it was who tranſacted buſineſs with all the grantees and farmers of the ſtate. His favour, which was ſeldom beſtowed gratuitouſly, was indiſpenſably neceſſary to them. If they were unfortunate enough to diſpleaſe him, there was no chicane which they might not expect, nor any exactions to which they were not

liable. He was charged to enforce all the real or pretended claims of the Apoſtolical Chamber.

Thus, however pure might be the intentions of the heads of office, every thing was ſubject to the caprices and to the rapacity of underlings. Braſchi, when elevated to the dignity of cardinal, was ſucceeded in his poſt of treaſurer by the prelate Palotta, one of the moſt upright men in Rome, and even one of the moſt enlightened; his manner was rude and repulſive; he was the dread of intriguers and knaves; but he could not reach them in the ſhade under which they contrived to conceal themſelves. He attempted to effect ſeveral uſeful reforms; but, counteracted by his inferiors in office, and ill ſeconded by the pope himſelf, he was able to give proofs of little more than of his zeal and underſtanding. Pius VI. held him in great eſteem. When he raiſed him to the cardinalate, he ſuffered him to keep his place contrary to cuſtom; but, inconſtant in his affections, and inconſiſtent in all his meaſures, he was unjuſt that he might not appear ungrateful. He was indebted for the beginning of his good fortune to the houſe of Ruffo. A cardinal of that name, being ſtruck with his fine perſon, ſhewed him particular attention, and took him into his houſe, when he firſt arrived at Rome from Ceſena, while ſtill a very young man. But Benedict XIV. being in want of a ſecretary, cardinal Ruffo recommended Braſchi, who wrote a very fine hand, and whoſe ſervices were accepted by the pope. This favour, to which he was indebted for the commencement of his fortunate career, had made a deep impreſſion upon his mind. A prelate, nephew to his benefactor, was at Rome. He was an enlightened man, brilliant even in his vices, immoral, and perfectly well calculated for intrigue. He ſpared nothing to attract the attention of a pope, who was the creature of his houſe; flattered the vanity of the pontiff, and eaſily obtained a place in a heart already prediſpoſed in his favour by gratitude. Pius VI. thought it incumbent on him to acquit himſelf of his debt at the expenſe of the virtuous cardinal Palotta, and conferred on the prelate Ruffo the place of treaſurer of the Apoſtolical Chamber. He could not make a choice more likely to excite the public indignation againſt him; and at the ſame time to gratify his own rapacity. Ruffo, deſtitute of all ſcruples as to himſelf, felt none while favouring the prevailing paſſions of the pontiff; his vanity, his prodigality, and his blind attachment to his family. Fearing, in his turn

turn to be deficient in gratitude, he encoutaged Pius VI in his ſeductive, but diſaſtrous projects; and, without forgetting himſelf, enriched the pope's nephews in the moſt ſcandalous manner. It is thus that, by an interchange of favours conferred and received, weakneſſes, and even vices, ſometimes aſſume the ſpecious appearance of gratitude.

This prelate, Ruffo, contributed more than all the other miniſters employed during the long pontificate of Pius VI. to render him odious to the Roman people; and to impel the government to its ruin, by increaſing its debt to a degree hitherto unknown. When Braſchi was himſelf treaſurer, and preſented, in 1766, the accounts of the Apoſtolical Chamber, its debts amounted to ſixty-one millions of crowns. In 1789 they had increaſed to eighty-ſeven. The criminal complaiſance of Ruffo had, in compliance with the ruinous caprices of the pope, iſſued an enormous quantity of *cedole*. That paper money was at ſix or ſeven per cent. diſcount; and articles of the firſt neceſſity had riſen to an intolerable price; for the police of grain was, in the eccleſiaſtical ſtate, the ſource of the greateſt abuſes, and might, at ſome moment or other, become that of the greateſt diſaſters. The country, though indifferently cultivated, might have ſufficed for the ſubſiſtence of the inhabitants. In good years, notwithſtanding defective huſbandry, there was ſometimes a ſurplus of wheat to export; but in dry ſeaſons every kind of crop failed, and both men and cattle were famiſhed. The government was in this reſpect entirely deſtitute of foreſight; it *lived from hand to mouth*; that is to ſay, the governed were often upon the point of ſtarving. The Roman nobility and the cardinals had always reſources in the produce of their farms; but when the crops were bad, the reſt of the Roman people ran a riſk of experiencing the moſt dreadful famine.

Theſe abuſes, and theſe dangers, proceeded above all from the manner in which the pope's ſubjects were ſupplied with proviſions. At the head of the department of ſubſiſtence was a præfect of the *annona*, who ſuperintended the whole eccleſiaſtical ſtate, except the three legations (thoſe of Bologna, Ferrara, and the preſidency of the duchy of Urbino). It was he who was particularly charged with the victualling of Rome. An exportation of corn was forbid; and the farmers were expoſed to the moſt cruel impoſitions; the government buying up almoſt all their crops at its own

price. It retained, however, the power of enriching perſons in favour, by granting them particular permiſſions to export. Thus every thing was calculated to excite complaints, and render miſery infallible. This branch of the public affairs was maneged with ſo little addreſs, that it did not even enrich itſelf while impoveriſhing the people; but, on the contrary, within the two laſt years incurred a debt of two millions of crowns. Hence it was that the French, when they occupied the eccleſiaſtical ſtate, found agriculture in the moſt deplorable ſituation. Ill-adviſed in all its plans, even in thoſe which ſeemed to have the public welfare for their object, the government had deviſed a plan highly injurious to the cultivator, with a view of reviving the ſpirit of agriculture. The general ſloth, which proceeded much leſs from the diſpoſition of the inhabitants than from the vices of the government, ſuffered a great part of this country, ſo much favoured by nature, to lay totally waſte. Along the banks of the Adriatic ſea the fertility of the ſoil was turned at leaſt to ſome account, that diſtrict producing corn, pulſe, oil, wine, wood, hemp, wool, and ſilk, in tolerable abundance; but on the oppoſite coaſt not a twentieth part of the land was in a ſtate of cultivation. What did the Roman government contrive under the pontificate of Pius VI. in order to remedy this evil? It authoriſed the farmers of eſtates to till any land in their neighbourhood, whether compriſed in their leaſe or not; but as this permiſſion might prove too weak an excitement to ſloth, it decreed, that, where farmers neglected to avail themſelves of it, the præfect of the *annona* might ſend a plough into the waſte lands, and have them ſown on account of the Apoſtolical Chamber. After this they were to remain at his mercy as long as he might think proper. The farmer was thus diſpoſſeſſed of his rights, and the proprietor was forced to accept, as the rent of his land, thus cultivated without his conſent, whatever it produced in a ſtate of paſturage. Never did government ſeem to carry its paternal ſolicitude to a greater length. To ſtand thus in the place of its children! To take upon itſelf the trouble at which their indolence recoiled! What a ſublime conception of philanthropy! But it is well known how thoſe concerns are managed, which are undertaken by even the moſt active and moſt enlightened governments. The reaſon why the fine plan deviſed by that of Rome did not prove more diſaſtrous

was

was its being put very imperfectly into execution. The decay of agriculture in the ecclesiastical state proceeded from a radical vice; from that establishment of the *annona*, an endless source of oppression, and the cause of the most scandalous monopoly. Before the reign of the great duke Leopold, Tuscany was cursed with a similar institution. It was destroyed; and since that period the Tuscan agriculture has been in the most flourishing state. But Rome seemed to be the favourite country of prejudices of every kind, which appeared to be sanctioned by long custom, as well as by religion itself. So many people were interested in their preservation, that their destruction could never come from the interior. Dissolution was inevitable; a violent overthrow almost impossible. Besides, profane and sacred abuses were so interwoven in a government, where the throne was upon the altar, that it appeared impossible to touch the former without attacking the latter. Of whatever nature they may be, they are always intimately connected. Of this France affords us a proof. Who did not desire, in 1789, the abolition of *corvées*, the suppression of gabels, the equal distribution of the taxes, &c.? But no sooner was the accomplishment of this unanimous wish in agitation, than the impulsion given by enthusiasm reached all other abuses, in spite of those who were interested in their preservation.

But let us return to the other vicious institutions which existed at the accession of Pius VI., and which only grew worse during his pontificate.

It was not enough for the subjects of the pope to lie at the mercy of his government in regard to their supply of corn; but they were also condemned to suffer the same hardship with respect to meat and oil. The government, as if it had conspired against the land-holders, taxed the beasts that were brought to market at a low price, and did not easily grant permission to export them. How then could any one have an interest in breeding cattle? Government also enjoyed the monopoly of oil. All that was produced in the ecclesiastical state was brought to Rome; and there the price was fixed by the department of *La Grascia*, which afterwards sold it to the retail dealers. The result of the means taken to furnish the Roman people with provisions in abundance, and at a cheap rate, was, that meat, bread, and oil, were scarce, and consequently dear; that the supply of the latter, which the ecclesiastical state might have produced in sufficient quan-

tity

tity to do without the assistance of foreigners, often failed; that there was an annual necessity for importing a large quantity from the kingdom of Naples; and that the establishments charged with these monopolies ruined the people while they were ruining themselves. Hence it was that the populace, in these latter times, often broke out into murmurs; and that the pope, while passing through the streets of Rome, and distributing benedictions, the only thing which he lavished upon his *faithful subjects*, was more than once greeted with these alarming words: *Holy father, it is not benedictions that we want; it is meat and oil.* But the Roman people were sensible of their own weakness, as well as of that of their government; and seemed to wait, like the man in the gospel afflicted with the palsy, for some kind hand to throw them into the pool.

Manufactures, commerce, every thing at Rome partook of this weakness; the certain harbinger of an approaching dissolution.

In the ecclesiastical state there were several manufactories of common linen, for the use of the lower classes of people.

There was also at Rome a manufactory of tapestry, wrought with considerable art into excellent imitations of the finest pictures; but it was only one of those establishments of parade which tend rather to impoverish than to benefit the subject. We shall pass over in silence a few manufactories of silk, a little above mediocrity. Pius VI., while treasurer, had persuaded Clement XIV. to establish, at the expense of the Apostolical Chamber, manufactories of cotton; which have had the fate of all those that governments manage on their own account. Hats, even those of the finest quality, and some silken stuffs, were also manufactured, and not altogether without success; but the only branch of industry which really flourished, in spite of the vices of administration, was the tanning of leather.

As to commerce, every thing seemed to conspire against its prosperity. In no country was it burdened with more prohibitions; and that disastrous system was still further extended by Pius VI. To ensure the success of the cotton manufactory, which he considered as his own work, he imposed, in 1777, a duty of 24 per cent. upon all foreign cottons. Hence resulted, as always happens in similar cases, an encouragement, not for the manufactory which it

is intended to ſecure againſt rivalry, but for contraband trade. Beſides, nothing could be exported without the permiſſion of the prelates, who preſided over the different eſtabliſhments; and theſe exceptions to the general rule were not granted without difficulty, and experienced in their execution a number of impediments and delays. The production which alone, perhaps, ought to have been kept in the country, was very eaſily exported: this was the wool, which is of an excellent quality, and might have employed a great number of hands. But inſtead of doing ſo, it was ſent in great quantities to France and Switzerland; came back afterwards manufactured; and the poor Romans, who might have clothed themſelves with their own hands, and with their own wool, were condemned to pay the wages of foreign induſtry. Some manufactories of fine cloth were, however, ſet up; among others, that which is known at Rome by the name of St. Michael. But their adminiſtration was ſo expenſive, that although they produced cloth very little inferior to thoſe of France and England, the latter were preferred, becauſe they could be had at a cheaper rate. Theſe were far from being the only commodities for which the Roman people were tributary to foreigners. The imports into the eccleſiaſtical ſtate were enormouſly great. Some idea of this may be formed by a ſingle article. A few years ſince it was calculated, that the chocolate it received annually from abroad amounted to near two millions of Roman crowns.

The Apoſtolical Chamber, by its bad management, was reſponſible for all theſe cauſes of impoveriſhment. The finances, of which it adminiſtered the principal branches, viſibly decayed in their hands. It was always very difficult to aſcertain with preciſion the revenue of the eccleſiaſtical ſtate. The moſt authentic calculations made it amount to two millions and a half of Roman crowns (about 600,000l. ſterling), including the produce of the cuſtom-houſe, and of the receipts of the *datario*, and of the chancery. The territorial revenue which it collected might alone have been made to produce eight hundred thouſand Roman crowns; but as it was farmed out by favour and intrigue, it ſcarcely yielded four hundred and fifty thouſand. Careleſſneſs and incapacity did more miſchief in the eccleſiaſtical ſtate than the moſt cruel extortions, and the moſt-ſcandalous depredations, do in others. There was no great grievance to

complain

complain of; and yet diſorder prevailed every where. The cauſes of diſſolution, that were ſilently acting upon this country, reſembled thoſe chronic diſorders which, though unattended by violent pains, lead to an inevitable and approaching death.

The government not only wanted ſufficient energy and information for the adminiſtration of the finances, and for the encouragement of induſtry, but alſo for the repreſſion of crimes, in a country where every thing conſpired to render them common; the influence of a burning climate; idleneſs; a want of education; and the hope of impunity founded upon the privileges attached to a number of places and perſons. It was particularly at Rome that all theſe cauſes of diſorder had a powerful influence. During the eleven years that the pontificate of Clement XIII. laſted, ten thouſand murders were committed in the eccleſiaſtical ſtate, and near four thouſand in the capital alone.

Almoſt all modern Romans had at hand the means of ſpeedily ſatisfying their anger or their vengeance. There were few who did not carry pocket piſtols; and they were ſtill better provided with their favourite weapon, the ſtiletto. In vain did prohibitions proſcribe the uſe of thoſe murderous inſtruments. Reſpected only by thoſe in regard to whom they were unneceſſary, they were infringed by thoſe whoſe malignity rendered them formidable, and by the multitude of idle perſons attached to the ſervice of the prelates, cardinals, and grandees. One of the prerogatives of thoſe illuſtrious perſonages was to be ſurrounded with aſſaſſins; the government, which paſſed for a mild one, becauſe it was weak, having little regard for the life of the citizens, but, at the ſame time, a great reſpect for privileges. Theſe fatal immunities extended every where. To enjoy them it was ſufficient to be under the protection of a foreign power, and particularly of a foreign prieſt. Of this a ſtriking inſtance occurred in 1784.

Don Miguel Eſpinoſa, a Spaniſh prieſt, committed a forgery upon the Roman bank. It was a capital offence, and the fact was aſcertained; but he had a double claim to the indulgence of the government. The governor of Rome ſent his agents to his apartments; and the prieſt with great compoſure ſhewed them the notes that he had forged. Compliments being paid him upon the excellence of the imitation, he named one of his friends, who had ſent him from

from Naples the paper on which they were fabricated; and gave ſome of them to the agents of the governor, in order that they might be compared with the genuine bills. The reſemblance was found to be perfect. As the place of governor of Rome led to the dignity of cardinal, he who occupied it did not wiſh to mar his fortune by an act of ſevere juſtice. He had an interview with Pallavicini, the ſecretary of ſtate, who enjoined him ſecrecy, and afterwards waited upon the Spaniſh ambaſſador. They ſent for Don Miguel, who confeſſed that he had been ſeveral years at Rome ſoliciting a benefice; that as yet he had been able to obtain nothing from the pope but hopes; that having ſpent the little money he brought with him, he had no other means of exiſtence left but that of forging the *cedole*; and that the amount of thoſe which he had already put into circulation was not leſs than five thouſand crowns. The miniſter and the cardinal looked at each other, aſtoniſhed at the frankneſs of the culprit; but the queſtion was to avoid a publicity diſgraceful to Don Miguel's nation, and to ſave the church from ſo ſcandalous a reproach. At the ſame time, as it was not right to let a *poor wretch* ſtarve who was about to be deprived of his only reſource, the cardinal agreed that he ſhould be allowed a penſion of twenty crowns a month, till ſuch time as a *good* benefice ſhould be given him. Don Miguel, on his part, had the goodneſs to promiſe not to forge any more *cedole*, provided the cardinal kept his word. And this was what was called a mild government.

Some years after a fact occurred, which ſhews how juſtice was adminiſtered at Rome, and what were the means deviſed by Pius VI. to ſupply the want of a vigilant police. It is mentioned by Gorani, who aſſerts that he had it from the Spaniſh ambaſſador.

Rovaglio, the pope's watchmaker, who lived in one of the moſt frequented ſtreets of Rome, had run ſome riſk of being robbed during the night. He went to complain to the prelate, ſince cardinal, Buſca, then governor of Rome, who promiſed that a watch ſhould be ſet over his houſe. The robbers, as well as the watchmaker, knew the worth of ſuch a promiſe, and determined to take their revenge. But Rovaglio, who was prepared for them, ſupplied the defect of the police; and a ſecond time they miſſed their aim. The pope ſeeing Rovaglio ſhortly after, aſked him for

an account of his adventure, and furniſhed him with an expedient, characteriſtic at once of the pontiff, and of the government of Rome. *You muſt be hard put to it indeed*, ſaid *he, to rid yourſelf of theſe robbers. In the name of God, why do you not provide yourſelf with muſkets and piſtols. Fire upon the rogues; and, in caſe of your killing them, I give you abſolution before-hand.* Could a government which thus avowed its impotence expect a long duration? Accordingly ſeveral years before its overthrow, the Romans themſelves ſaid, by way of accounting for its preſervation, that it was *a perpetual miracle of St Peter.*

The Jews were, perhaps, the only perſons who had reaſon to complain of the ſeverity, not to ſay of the cruelty, of the Roman government. Fanaticiſm, by turns ferocious and abſurd, had dictated the laws beneath which they groaned, and which had acquired an increaſe of rigour under the pontificate of Pius VI. As long ago as the year 1775, the pontiff, perſuaded that the laws of humanity were not made for infidels, had iſſued againſt them the moſt barbarous edict. Confined within their infectious quarter, the *Ghetto*, they could only ſhew themſelves in the reſt of the city by day, and were bound to return to their priſon at ſun-ſet, under *pain of death.* If they wiſhed to go into the country for a few days, to breathe a purer air, they were obliged to ſolicit a particular permiſſion. They were forbid, under the penalty of the gallies, to approach the convent of the Annonciada, or to be ſeen in any church, convent, or hoſpital, of Rome. All intercourſe with Chriſtians was forbidden them; and they incurred corporal puniſhment if they dared to keep a ſervant of that religion. A Chriſtian could not admit them into his coach, nor even lend them one. It was only upon a journey that they were allowed the uſe of a carriage. As a mark of reprobation, neither men nor women could go out without wearing ſome badge of a yellow colour. Their interment was attended with no funeral pomp; nor did any inſcription deſignate their tomb, and recall them to the recollection of thoſe to whom they had once been dear.

Theſe laws were not rigorouſly obſerved. Several were grown obſolete; and others carried with them, in their very ſeverity, a ſure pledge of their non-execution. But the ſtigma they affixed, to thoſe againſt whom they were levelled, was indelible. They might be enforced at any time without

without a moment's warning: attempts were ſometimes made to do ſo; and the Jews dragged on a miſerable exiſtence under the continual influence of terror. It was by dint of gold that ſome of them purchaſed momentary favours; ſuch, for inſtance, as their enlargement from the infectious priſon in which the reſt of the ſect was confined. Avarice, which at Rome neglected no means of gratification, ſold to theſe unfortunate victims a few acts of toleration; and it was in the reſidence of him, who called himſelf the vicar of a merciful God, a God of charity, that theſe attacks were made upon human nature. Nor was this all. In a ſtill more barbarous age, if it be poſſible, in the fifteenth century, the idea was conceived of aſſimilating the Jews to the brute creation, by making them run, during the carnival, for the diverſion of the public, and in preſence of the ſovereign pontiff himſelf. There were at Rome Jew races, as there were horſe-races elſewhere. At length they were exempted from this ſervile abaſement; but, that they might not loſe the remembrance of ſuch an act of kindneſs, or rather to prolong their humiliation, they were obliged to ſend, to the chief magiſtrate of Rome, an annual deputation, which, in the moſt humble poſture, paid a hundred crowns as a mark of their gratitude. The capitol was the ſcene of this unworthy imitation of the hoſtages, which the tributary kings of Aſia formerly came to pay to the Roman ſenate.

Plagued in every outward act of life, the Jews of Rome were alſo tormented in their conſcience. By virtue of an injunction, equally ridiculous and barbarous, they were obliged every ſabbath, to hear a ſermon, in which a Dominican, with a thundering voice, endeavoured to convert them by maledictions; and ſhewed them hell gaping to ſwallow them up, if they did not haſten to take refuge in the boſom of the church. In vain did the poor wretches ſtrive to elude theſe periodical exhortations, equally tireſome and uſeleſs. They conceived the idea of ſtopping up their ears. Their ears were ſubjected to the examination of their tormentors. They ſlept, or feigned to ſleep. They were ſhook till they awoke; and no reſource remained but coughing, ſpitting, and yawning. At length they came out of church ſomewhat worſe Chriſtians than they went in; ſome laughing at the imbecillity of their tyrants, and others curſing a religion which employed ſuch means, in order

order to make proſelytes. It may be truly ſaid, that Pius VI., who, by a few good actions performed during his long career, had incurred ſome little ſuſpicion of humanity; it may be truly ſaid, that he laid a greater load of intolerance upon theſe unfortunate victims than any one of his predeceſſors. They had more than one tribute to pay to his rapacity; of which the effects were ſo fatal to himſelf, and the produce ſo ill employed. He ſeemed to have an excluſive taſte for brilliant enterpriſes. Thoſe which were only uſeful had no charms for his vanity. Inſtead of burying millions in the Pontine marſhes; inſtead of impoveriſhing his treaſury to enrich the ſacriſty of St. Peter's, to embelliſh his abbey of Subiaco, and to eſtabliſh at Ceſena, his native place, a ſumptuous library, which he could very well have diſpenſed with; why did he not employ the ſurplus of his revenue in carrying on the repairs, begun by his predeceſſors, in the port of Ancona? in confining to their beds the rivers of La Romagna and of the Ferrareſe; in draining the marſhes of thoſe two provinces; and in thus reſtoring to ſalubrity and fertility a country formerly ſo wholeſome, and in ſo high a ſtate of cultivation? The only means which he employed to improve it conſiſted in the making and repairing of roads; and even this was done by oppreſſive means, which ſerved only to add to the miſery of the people. Contractors attended at the Apoſtolical Chamber, and propoſed to him the making of a new road. Their plan met with his approbation. They advanced the money for its execution; but, in order to reimburſe them afterwards, the pariſhes intereſted in the work were arbitrarily taxed by the Apoſtolical Chamber. The pope had thus, it muſt be confeſſed, made ſeveral new roads, and had repaired the old ones; and, at the moment when he finiſhed his pontificate, it was the part of his adminiſtration the leaſt neglected. But to how much diſcontent did he give riſe, even when buſied in undertakings which, if better contrived, might have been uſeful to the people? He appeared inſenſible to their murmurs. Captivated with every thing that was likely to ſpread his fame to diſtant regions, he intereſted himſelf little in the public welfare. The father of the faithful forgot that he ought alſo to be the father of his ſubjects. He took no concern but for himſelf and his family; and even his affection for his nephews was only a modification of ſelf-love. The errors into which he was led

led by that ſentiment, the offſpring of his vanity, will be the ſubject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

Nepotiſm of Pius VI.

THE blind affection of the Roman pontiffs for their family, and particularly for their nephews, in whom, in default of children they could acknowledge, they ſeemed to ſee their exiſtence renewed, often occaſioned, in the government of modern Rome, a diſorder almoſt unknown in other governments. The nephews of the popes generally filled the place of the favourites and miſtreſſes of other ſovereigns. The abuſes thence reſulting, though ſomewhat leſs ſcandalous, were not the leſs deplorable. Other deſpots may change their favourites and their miſtreſſes; may ſtrip them, after having enriched them; and may withdraw the confidence and credit of which they ſhew themſelves unworthy. The miſchief which is done by, and for them, may not be altogether irreparable. This is not the caſe with the pope's nephews. The vanity of the uncle protects them from all danger of inconſtancy. His weakneſs inſures them the eaſy acquirement of an aſcendancy, and the certainty of retaining it. The families of an hereditary ſovereign poſſeſs a permanent eſtate, independent of the life of a ſingle man. The fortune of the relations of an elective ſovereign depend upon the duration of his reign: conſequently as the popes are choſen at an advanced age, it was not uncommon to ſee their nephews like the favourites of old Galba,

——————S'empreſſer ardemment,
A qui dévoreroit le règne d'un moment †.

The

† Eager to devour the reign of a moment,

The pontificate of Pius VI. united all these inconveniences; and the length of it carried them to an unexampled pitch. That of Clement XIII. had lasted but a short time; long enough, however, to develop the abuses of nepotism. He invested two of his nephews with the Roman purple, and it is well known what fatal consequences had well nigh resulted to him from the ascendancy which he suffered one of them to obtain.

Under his successor, Ganganelli, the very name of nepotism was almost forgotten. Equally destitute of the advantages of birth and fortune, he retained the modesty of his first condition. He declared, on assuming the tiara, that he would live like an apostle; and he kept his word. He did little or nothing for his family. Two of his nephews, who were sent for to the college of Rome without his knowledge, were presented to him. *If you study*, said he, *I will take care of you. If you are idle, I will send you back to your relations.* During the five years that their uncle's pontificate lasted, the favours they obtained from him were very trifling. They wept at his death; and though Clement XIV. possessed all the virtues which conciliate affection and esteem, theirs were almost the only tears that were shed. Nothing was done to console them.

Upon the accession of Pius VI. it was not expected that he would revive an abuse which had grown obsolete during the reign of his predecessor. The cardinal de Bernis wrote thus to Versailles: *He is the last of his name; there is therefore no nepotism to be feared.*

Il s'en présentera, gardez-vouz d'en douter †.

Pius VI., who had, in fact, no male relation of his own name, began by announcing the most exemplary disinterestedness in regard to the preferment of his family. Having a promotion of cardinals to make about two months after his election, he was much pressed to give a hat to his uncle, prelate Bandi, an obscure, but worthy old man, who was bishop of Imola; but he refused with a firmness which seemed to be of excellent augury, as well as every thing else that was remarked in him during the first months of his reign. The following are the words in which he was described by an impartial observer, who had been in long habits

† Relations, be assured, will present themselves.

habits of intimacy with him, and who was beginning to underſtand his character.

" Pius VI. has defects, and ſtill greater prejudices. " Political matters make but little impreſſion upon him, " becauſe he has, during his whole life, followed the pro- " feſſion of advocate or judge. He is haſty and impetuous " in the firſt moment; but ſoon grows calm of himſelf, or " in conſequence of the reaſons which are alleged to him. " It is uſeleſs to endeavour to make him accede to a project " which he is determined to reject; but he willingly " adopts a ſubſtitute. The great art with him is to flatter, " or ſpare *his vanity*. He is fond of fame, and his heart is " naturally humane and generous. It is a pity that his " Roman education has a little injured the work of nature; " but, with all that, no *popeable* cardinal is his ſuperior."

Such, with ſome few reſtrictions, was the opinion entertained of him by ſeveral judicious perſons, a ſhort time before the revolution at Rome. Some principal traits of his character had then, however, eſcaped the diſcerning eye of his judges. We have already ſeen the errors into which he was led by his ungovernable love of ſplendid undertakings, and by the prodigality which reſulted from it. We ſhall preſently ſee thoſe which originated in his affection for his nephews.

Formerly the pope's nephews had it in their power to enrich themſelves by means of the pious tribute which flowed from every part of Europe into their uncle's treaſury. But ſince that ſource has diminiſhed, it has been only by oppreſſing their ſubjects that the popes have been able to indulge the weakneſs of nepotiſm; for the legitimate ſavings of a Roman pontiff are but of little account. Thoſe of Ganganelli, notwithſtanding the liberality of ſome foreign princes and his great economy, did not exceed ſeventy thouſand crowns. We are about to ſee how Pius VI., who was far leſs ſcrupulous than his predeceſſor, ſupplied the deficiency of thoſe means which were hitherto conſidered as legitimate.

His ſiſter had two ſons, who bore their father's name, Oneſti. Before he ſent for them to Rome, he was already buſied about their fortune. As long ago as the year 1775 he bought of the duke di Lanti all the eſtates he poſſeſſed in the environs of Imola for the ſum of ſixty thouſand crowns, and preſented them to his young relatives. Neither of them were known;

known; when Romuald, the youngeſt, came to Rome at the beginning of 1778, and obtained a place in the eccleſiaſtical academy. His firſt appearance was very prepoſſeſſing. To a countenance at once ſweet and expreſſive, he joined a great deal of candour and much amenity of manners. Pius VI. received him with the tenderneſs of a father, and lodged him in the apartments which he occupied before he was pope. Young Romuald, who paſſed two hours every day with his uncle, went out but little, and endeavoured to improve himſelf. Every body was pleaſed with him; and it was already foreſeen that his preferment would not be neglected. The firſt favour that Pius VI. granted him was to diſpatch him to France, as bearer of the cardinal's hat to Meſſieurs de Rohan and de la Rochefoucault. He was very anxious that he ſhould be well received in that country, where there was then no cauſe of complaint againſt Pius VI. The cardinal de Bernis was of opinion, that the ſending of his nephew to Paris could not fail to cement the good underſtanding that ſubſiſted between the head of the church and its eldeſt ſon. He neglected nothing to gain his court's approbation of the pope's choice, and to intereſt it in favour of the young prelate. Oneſti, who had already aſſumed his uncle's name, ſet out for Paris in the month of October.

It war during his ſtay there that Pius VI. was guilty of one of thoſe head-ſtrong acts, which he was apt to commit when left to his own diſcretion.

A ſuffragan of the elector of Treves, of the name of *Hontheim*, had, a few years before, publiſhed, under the name of *Febronius*, a book very bold for the time; and in which he recalled to mind the principles of the primitive church, and inveighed bitterly againſt the uſurpations of the court of Rome. The holy ſee, which was in the habit of thinking religion in danger as often as any attack was made upon its prerogatives, was deeply affected by it. But the time for launching the ſpiritual thunder was gone by, and it was brooding over its ſorrows in ſilence, when all on a ſudden appeared a recantation of the work of Febronius. Pius VI., who could not contain his joy, propoſed to celebrate with the greateſt ſplendor this triumph of the Roman church. He was careful, however, not to entruſt his project to the cardinal de Bernis, who would undoubtedly have oppoſed it, and with whom he was always upon the reſerve whenever

whenever he had any injudicious meaſure in contemplation. On Chriſtmas eve, after the midnight maſs, when he was ſtill panting after his pontifical fatigues, he got into the pulpit at St. Peter's church, and, in preſence of all the cardinals, and of an immenſe auditory, read the edifying recantation with a ſtentorophonic voice, and accompanied it with a pretty violent invective againſt the maxims oppoſed to thoſe of the Holy See, without recollecting that there were then ſeveral governments to which, by ſo doing, he might give offence. When his firſt enthuſiaſm ſubſided, he felt ſome compunction; and the ſevere obſervations of the cardinal de Bernis awakened his fears. His only puniſhment, however, was the ſarcaſms which were caſt upon him with a liberal hand, even by the people of Rome.

When the prelate, his nephew, was informed of this ridiculous ſcene, he could not help bluſhing at the imprudence of the pope. He was in a country where, in good company particularly, theſe pious farces were criticiſed without mercy. A report had been ſpread, a ſhort time before, that the ſovereign pontiff's mind was a little deranged; and to the great mortification of young Romuald, the news of the ſcene, in which his holineſs had been the ſole actor, did not fail to accredit the rumour.

He returned to Rome in the courſe of April 1779. The pope at that time was only beginning to return from a very ſerious illneſs; and young count Oneſti appeared much ſhocked at finding him in ſo feeble and languiſhing a ſtate. His affliction was, no doubt, increaſed by the idea, that the cardinal's hat, which he expected as the reward of his miſſion, would elude his graſp. Ere long, however, his grief ſubſided: and his hopes were renewed by his uncle's convaleſcence. Pius VI. began to re-appear in public; and upon that occaſion received from the public marks of affection which he had reaſon to think ſincere, becauſe they were then not altogether undeſerved. He repaired on foot to the palace of Count Romuald, to ſee the pictures, the furniture, and the rich tapeſtry of which he had deprived himſelf, in order to add to the luxury of his nephew. While admiring theſe ornaments, he ſeemed to enjoy the ſacrifices they had coſt him; and gratitude appeared to the darling nephew a very agreeable tribute to pay. Tears ſtood in both their eyes; and the ſcene would have been moving, if it had not unfortunately been exhibited at the expenſe of the Roman people.

But a ſingle nephew was not enough for the affection of Pius VI. Count Romuald had an elder brother, whoſe name was count Lewis, and who was as yet unknown. As he was not deſtined for the church, it was neceſſary to procure him a rich eſtabliſhment by ſome other means. He made his appearance at Rome towards the end of the year. The Roman nobles, and all thoſe whoſe intereſt it was to pleaſe the pope, loaded his two nephews with attentions, to which the latter were not backward in making a courteous return. It began to be foreſeen that they would be a heavy charge to the ſtate.

In the courſe of 1780, count Romuald was created apoſtolical prothonotary. This was a dignity purely honorary; but conferred a right of wearing the purple gown, and the title of *monſignore*. In the country of vanity by excellence, nothing more was neceſſary to render it deſirable. But it had ſtill other advantages. Without it there was no poſſibility of running the career of ambition. The individual, who wiſhed to obtain it, was obliged to prove that he had an income of at leaſt 1500 Roman crowns. It will eaſily be believed that the pope's nephew had no difficulty in furniſhing this proof. Shortly after young Romuald was created *major domo* of the ſovereign pontiff, that is to ſay, high ſteward of his houſehold. This was one of thoſe places which were called *cardinalitian*, becauſe they led infallibly to a cardinal's hat. Such were alſo thoſe of the governor of Rome, of the treaſurer and auditor of the Apoſtolical Chamber, of the preſident of Urbino, the principal nunciatures, &c. In the conferring of theſe favours there was nothing objectionable: count Romuald only obtained dignities, which in default of him would have been given to others, and an income which was no burden to the public treaſury. Beſides, his talents were not of a ſplendid kind, and his diſpoſition was quiet and unaſſuming. As he bore his faculties meekly, the favour he enjoyed was forgiven him. But how is it poſſible to forgive the pope the prodigality and exceſſive avidity which he afterwards indulged, in order to heap riches upon count Romauld and his brother?

The latter in particular, who, on his arrival from his own country, ſcarcely poſſeſſed five hundred Roman crowns, ſoon equalled in opulence the richeſt families of Rome, and took advantage of his uncle's weakneſs in order to collect

lect preſents from all quarters, and to enter into ſpeculations which betrayed the moſt ſhameful avarice. His marriage with donna Conſtanza, the daughter of that madame Falconieri, who was ſaid to be his uncle's miſtreſs, was celebrated in the courſe of the year 1781. Pius VI. gave them the nuptial benediction with great parade in the Sixtine chapel; pronounced upon the occaſion one of thoſe flowery diſcourſes of which he was not ſparing, and to which his talents were not ill adapted; ſent to his nephew's houſe a caſket containing ten thouſand gold doubloons; and gave both to him and his bride a golden roſaryſet with diamonds, and a ſeries of medals enriched with precious ſtones, &c. This was not enough. His nephew's match being greater in point of family than fortune, it gave occaſion to a donation which excited many complaints. The eſtates that the Jeſuits poſſeſſed at Tivoli had been confiſcated in favour of the Apoſtolical Chamber; and one hundred and thirty thouſand crowns had been offered for them by the prince of Santa Croce, and the marquis Bandini. The preceding year they had produced oil to the amount of twelve thouſand crowns. The Apoſtolical Chamber parted with them to count Oneſti for ſixty-five thouſand, and allowed him ſixty-five years to pay that ſum. An acquiſition ſo ſcandalouſly illegal could not proſper; and nobody would pity duke Braſchi on account of the poverty to which he is reduced, if he had experienced no other loſſes. It was ſhortly after that he bought the eſtate of Nemi, which lies contiguous to his poſſeſſions at Tivoli, and of which he took the name. His marriage procured him donations of a leſs exceptionable kind. The kings of France and Spain ſent preſents to the new married couple; and they received others from the cardinals, the Roman princes, the nobility, the prelates, the biſhops, the farmers of the Apoſtolical Chamber, and from the ſolicitors of favours of every claſs. The preſents were aſſembled in a great hall, where the vanity of Pius VI. was gratified by a ſight of them.

He neglected no means of laying liberality under contribution in favour of his nephews, particularly of that darling couple whom malignity took a pleaſure in conſidering as his daughter and as his ſon-in-law. One of the cuſtoms of the court of Rome was to ſend conſecrated baby-linen to the children of the principal catholic ſovereigns. Of what circumſtance in life did not ſuperſtition avail itſelf

in order to extend its empire? Towards the end of the year 1781 Louis XVI. had a ſon born, and the prince of Aſturia an Infant. Pius VI. entruſted to his niece the care of procuring the dreſſes that he was to ſend to the new-born princes. Counteſs Braſchi accordingly ſet about making ſuch purchaſes as might do honour to her taſte, and to her uncle's munificence. She was in hopes that this refinement of attention would not be thrown away; and ſhe already ſmiled at the proſpect of the preſents ſhe was about to receive in return. Pius VI. made the ſame calculation; and they were not diſappointed.

Shortly after, favours, penſions, and honours of all kinds were ſhowered down upon the heads of this fortunate couple. In 1785 the king of Sardinia gave count Braſchi a commandery worth more than two thouſand crowns a year; created him at the ſame time a commander of his order of St. Maurice and St. Lazarus, and ſent him the great croſs enriched with diamonds.

In the following year, the promotion of his brother to the cardinalate afforded Roman magnificence a new opportunity of diſplaying itſelf. It was a regular cuſtom for the cardinals, at the time of their appointment, to make preſents to the ſovereign pontiff. If the diſintereſtedneſs of Ganganelli was unable to aboliſh this cuſtom, he at leaſt received nothing but articles calculated to enrich his muſeum. But Pius VI. had a particular affection for preſents of intrinſic value; and his example was ſtrictly followed by his nephews, who ſhared in the liberality of the new cardinals. Cardinal Braſchi, already enriched by their gifts, was rendered ſtill more opulent by thoſe of the courtiers, who vied with each other in this mode of celebrating his promotion. The principal Roman families ſent him preſents very little analogous to his dignity, or even to his uncle's muſeum. He received from them magnificent carriages with ſets of ſix horſes, beautiful ſervices of china, gold boxes, watches ſet with diamonds, ſaddle-horſes richly capariſoned, and even bank notes very handſomely affixed to cakes of chocolate. The whole amount of theſe preſents was eſtimated at a hundred thouſand Roman crowns.

All this, however, was no more than proofs of *paſſive* avarice; and cardinal Braſchi might ſay with Célimène:

> Puis-je empêcher les gens de me trouver aimable *?
>
> * If people think me amiable, how can I help it?

But

But he gave that ſame year a proof of *active* avarice, not quite ſo eaſily excuſed. A certain prior, of the name of *Antereni*, who poſſeſſed an immenſe and very valuable perſonal property, left him in his will an undeterminate legacy. He authoriſed him to ſelect from his property, before any of it was brought to ſale, whatever furniture, plate, jewels, and other valuables he might fancy. The cardinal-nephew was not backward in availing himſelf of this permiſſion, which afforded him ſo fine an opportunity of furniſhing his palace at a ſmall expence. It was in the priory of this ſingular teſtator that the pope had built a charming habitation; where the moſt refined taſte diſputed the palm with magnificence. Hence it appears, that, with all the ſemblance of piety and apoſtolical zeal, Pius VI. was not ſo excluſively occupied with the intereſts of heaven, as not to reliſh the enjoyment of terreſtrial vanities; and his nephews, who had more leiſure, and were under leſs reſtraint, were ſtill leſs ſcrupulous. But if theſe various ways of acquiring treaſures, and enjoying life, were any way ſhameful, they were at leaſt no wiſe criminal. The ſame could not be ſaid of what remains to be related of their inſatiable avidity.

Would any one believe that about this time duke Braſchi bought up all the oil in the eccleſiaſtical ſtate, without regard to the law which forbade any individual to monopoliſe an article of the firſt neceſſity? The preſident of *la Graſcia*, within whoſe department it came, was obliged to purchaſe it of him again, and to raiſe the price ten per cent. at the expenſe of the conſumer. Would any one believe that at the ſame time he monopoliſed corn alſo, by procuring it at a low price of the country people, and then obtaining an excluſive permiſſion to export it. The weakneſs of Pius VI. overlooked all theſe diſorders; but they were grievances which the Romans did not forgive him; and when about this time he appeared in public, he was more than once greeted with hiſſes in return for his benedictions.

But a trait of rapacity ſtill more ſhameful, a ſcandalous proof of his blind affection for his nephews, raiſed indignation to the utmoſt height. This trait deſerves to be given in detail.

There was at Rome in 1783, one Amanzio Lepri, the laſt male deſcendant of a Milaneſe, who had enriched himſelf in collecting the cuſtoms of the eccleſiaſtical ſtate. He had taken prieſt's orders, and joined to a weak mind what

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moſt commonly accompanies it, a tender conſcience. His immenſe fortune, no doubt, excited ſome remorſe. He thought he ſhould ſanctify it; he thought he ſhould do a thing highly agreeable to God by adding to the opulence of his vicar and his family. He waited upon the ſovereign pontiff, and preſented him with a formal donation of all his patrimony in favour of the beloved nephews of his holineſs. Pius VI. was affected by this unexpected generoſity, and, quieting his ſcruples, accepted it with tears in his eyes (he wept without difficulty), laviſhing upon the donor the treaſure of his benedictions. The worthy Amanzio-Lepri had modeſtly reſerved himſelf, out of his great fortune, a penſion of five hundred crowns a year. Pius VI. was reſolved not to be outdone in generoſity; and inſiſted upon that ſum being paid him every month. Did the Holy Ghoſt reveal to him that thoſe payments would ſoon be at an end?

Amanzio, however, had a young niece of the name of Mary-Anne, who was his ward. His pious liberality had edified only the pontiff and his nephews; and the youthful Mary-Anne ſoon found defenders. Many diſtinguiſhed Romans, and even cardinal John Francis Albani, the dean of the Sacred College, eſpouſed her cauſe. It was at firſt without ſucceſs. Her mother, the marchioneſs Victoria Lepri, had courage enough to commence a ſuit againſt the pope, arraigning her ſilly relative's donation before the auditor of the Apoſtolical Chamber. This is a place which attaches him who occupies it to the perſon of the holy father; which renders him the organ of his juſtice; and which leads to the cardinalate. The auditor rejected the plea of Victoria Lepri; and a cardinal's hat was ſoon after the reward of his baſe complaiſance.

But the Lepri family were not diſcouraged. They appealed to the tribunal of the *Rota*, which, amid general corruption, was ſtill renowned for its inflexible equity. Among the many councils, congregations, and tribunals of Rome, this was, perhaps, the only eſtabliſhment which had preſerved all its claims to the public eſteem unimpaired. The deciſions had, in ſome ſort, the force of law out of the eccleſiaſtical ſtate. There was no appeal from them, unleſs a demand of reviſion; which was preſented to the *Rota* itſelf, and which it was free to admit or reject. A greater homage could not well be paid to the integrity of a tribunal. That of the *Rota* was compoſed of twelve judges, who were called

called auditors. Three were Romans, one a native of Bologna, one of Ferrara, one a Venetian, one a Milaneſe, one German, one Frenchman, and two Spaniards. The five firſt were paid by the pope; and each of the others by the ſtate to which he belonged. Upon a vacancy happening, the ſovereign who was to furniſh an auditor preſented three or four candidates, out of whom the pope ſelected one; but his choice generally fell upon the firſt on the liſt. The reporter of each cauſe was one of theſe twelve auditors of the *Rota*; but had no vote. The cauſe, after being pleaded by advocates, was firſt ſubmitted to the judgment of four auditors. It was decided, if three of them were of the ſame opinion. If there were an equal diviſion, it was diſcuſſed anew, but before ſix auditors. In caſe of there not being an abſolute plurality of voices in this ſecond trial, the cauſe was brought before the whole tribunal; and then only the reporter voted, if it was neceſſary for him to do ſo, in order to divide the ſuffrages.

Such was the organiſation of the tribunal of the *Rota*. Thus compoſed, moſt of its members were placed in a ſort of independence; which is the beſt guarantee of the integrity of judges. It is true that the auditors of the *Rota*, who were all prelates, had, even when foreigners, favours to expect from the court of Rome; but they were choſen with care, and ſeldom deviated from their duty. Their very ambition was intereſted in their rigid adherence to the laws of probity. When we have conſtant claims to eſteem, we ſoon alſo acquire claims to favour. Beſides, they could hardly avoid combining information with purity of intention. They were obliged to aſſign reaſons for their opinion, and conſequently to ſtudy the laws. Shame would have been the ſlighteſt expiation of their ignorance. The form of their ſentences was ſimple, and left little hold to chicane; and every thing concurred to make them at once reſpected and feared. Accordingly, an Engliſhman, in other points very little of an enthuſiaſt, who obſerved them narrowly during the period we are ſpeaking of, thus terminates their panegyric: "Yes, glorious preſervers of the ancient Roman "juriſprudence, it is with heart-felt ſatisfaction that I re- "cord this public teſtimony of my eſteem and venera- "tion."

It was before this tribunal, dreaded by the Holy See itſelf, that the cauſe of the young Mary-Anne Lepri was brought

brought by appeal. Of the four firſt judges who had to pronounce ſentence, three acknowledged the juſtice of her claims. They had, however, a moment of weakneſs. Seduced by the pope, they called in two other judges to inveſtigate a cauſe already legally decided, in order to give the holy father time to bring about an accommodation. By dint of chicane, it was poſſible to prove that Amanzio had a right to diſpoſe of his inheritance. His grandfather had eſtabliſhed a truſt of about a million of crowns in favour of Joſeph, one of his ſons, father of the young lady, with remainder to his heirs male; and in default of ſuch iſſue, the truſt was to revert to his ſecond ſon John, with the ſame limitations; and laſtly, in caſe of John dying without male iſſue, to his third ſon Amanzio; *ſtill excluding females, as long as the male branch ſhould exiſt.* It was upon this clauſe that Pius VI. endeavoured to ground the legality of the donation. But that did not render the ſpoliation of the ward either the leſs manifeſt or the leſs odious. He was ſenſible then of the weakneſs of his plea, and propoſed a compromiſe to the marchioneſs di Lepri. He offered to pay down two hundred thouſand crowns. The marchioneſs made anſwer, that even for three hundred thouſand ſhe would not ſuffer her daughter to be deprived of her inheritance. Another expedient was thought of: that was, to marry the young lady to the *major-domo* Oneſti, one of the pope's nephews, who was not yet a cardinal. But the legal proceedings went on faſter than the negotiation; and, in ſpite of all intrigues, the *Rota* unanimouſly pronounced ſentence, in the ſecond inſtance, in favour of Mary-Anne. This happened on the 2d of June 1785. The common people, who have every-where, even at Rome, an innate ſentiment of what is juſt and honeſt, aſſembled before the hall of the *Rota*, and to the great chagrin of the holy father, celebrated the triumph of juſtice by their noiſy acclamations.

An incident ſtill more unlucky occurred ſoon after. Amanzio Lepri died. Count Braſchi immediately had the will, that was favourable to his views, read and ſealed; but how great was his mortification when the youthful Mary-Anne produced a more recent one, which her uncle had ſecretly made, and in which he ſecured to her his fortune, by annulling the donation, made by him in his lifetime, to the pope and his nephews, as having been *extorted* by intrigue. A ſtrange embarraſſment for the papal family! But powerful

men

men have always the means of ſetting themſelves above the laws. In vain did the public voice exclaim againſt Pius VI., and in vain did the family of the deceaſed claim the execution of the ſentence of the *Rota*. The pope refuſed; and did it in that tone of ill-humour and harſhneſs which authority is ſo apt to aſſume when it feels itſelf in the wrong. He ſeduced the civilians; obtained a reviſion of the ſuit; and even found means to ſhake the integrity of the *Rota*. Several members, more courageous than the reſt, perſiſted in their firſt opinion. The eſtimable Acevédo, one of the two auditors of the *Rota* furniſhed by Spain, while his colleague d'Eſpuig, afterwards archbiſhop of Seville, was baſely flattering the avarice of the pontiff, nobly ſupported the cauſe of the adverſe party; and ſaid, that to ſtrip her of her inheritance would be to commit a ſhameful crime. His oppoſition was uſeleſs. In the courſe of 1786 the definitive decree was carried to Pius VI. upon a golden plate. It confirmed the donation of the imbecile Amanzio; and condemned to coſts of ſuit the lawful heirs, who were thus reduced to miſery and deſpair.

At this news the public indignation knew no bounds. The pope only ſuſpected it. He was ſurrounded by flatterers, or weak friends, who feared the debaſement of the Holy See, and endeavoured to palliate the iniquity of the pontiff. Pius VI., to excuſe himſelf, ſaid, with apparent frankneſs, that he wiſhed for nothing but the triumph of juſtice; but that when that triumph ſhould be once ſecured, the Lepri family might depend upon his generoſity. Foreigners, on the other hand, did not ſpare him. The court of Tuſcany was then engaged in a quarrel with the pope, and rejoiced at the means which he himſelf employed to diminiſh his popularity. The news-writer of Florence accompanied his account of the ſuit, and of its reſult, with the moſt cutting reflections, and was not diſavowed by his government.

The pope, however, met with more formidable antagoniſts. The family of Altieri, one of the moſt conſiderable in Rome, eſpouſed with warmth the cauſe of the youthful Mary-Anne. The prince of that name even married her a ſhort time after. The pope was obliged to yield; and the parties came to an accommodation in 1787; by virtue of which the duke of Braſchi was to keep all the perſonals of the rich inheritance, and to continue to enjoy the income of all the real eſtates for ſix years.

Would any one believe, however, that avidity, repenting of the ſacrifices extorted from her by ſome little remains of ſhame, recurred to new chicanes, in order to re-commence the ſuit. The *Rota* ſullied its reputation of integrity, by lending its agency to this iniquitous tranſaction. At length in 1789, arbitrators, appointed on both ſides, mediated a new accommodation, ſtill more advantageous to nepotiſm. The whole inheritance was divided into equal ſhares between the pope's nephews and the real heireſs. But the portion of one of the parties was enhanced by the addition of remorſe and ſhame. When we remember this infamous affair, we cannot feel much diſpoſed to pity the nephews of his holineſs, ſo rich a year ago, and at preſent ſo wretched; nor can we help believing the truth of the old proverb, which fixes the fate of *ill-gotten wealth*. When the apologiſts of Pius VI. wiſh to ſave the glory of his pontificate, by quoting the reſtoration of the Appian way, the draining of the Pontine marſhes, and the protection he gave to the arts, the way to ſhut their mouths is to remind them of the Lepri inheritance.

It is certainly the tranſaction which reflects the greateſt diſhonour on his reign. But Pius VI. may alſo be reproached with other inſtances of avidity, which are equally ſhameful, though not equally notorious. Has he not been known to avail himſelf of the moſt baſe expedients to enrich his nephews, and draw treaſure from the moſt polluted ſources? That celebrated Engliſh woman, who by turns diverted Europe by her extravagance, and ſhocked it by her profligacy; that woman, who carried about the ſcandal of bigamy from ſtate to ſtate; the ducheſs of Kingſton, in a word, bequeathed to him at her death a picture ſet round with diamonds. The legacy was valuable. It was worth forty thouſand florins. It was ſuppoſed that the delicacy of Pius VI. would reject this bequeſt; but he did not offer ſuch an affront to the *manes* of the illuſtrious *aventurière*. Nor did he always content himſelf with accepting in the moſt unbluſhing manner: he ſometimes graſped at the property of others without a claim, an apparent one at leaſt, and without feeling any remorſe of conſcience. At the time of the deſtruction of the Jeſuits, all the plate belonging to thoſe of Rome had been ſeiſed, and depoſited at *Monte di Pietà*. Pius VI. had it brought to him; converted part of it into chandeliers for his favorite abbey at Subiaco; and kept the reſt for his own

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uſe, or for the caprices of his liberality. The Ex-Jeſuits were very much exaſperated at this conduct. They alleged that, even after their ſuppreſſion, they ought at leaſt to retain their moveable property. They had, as it is well known, a very numerous and a very formidable party at Rome. In order to appeaſe them, Pius VI. was obliged to ſhew them ſome favour; and conſequently gave occaſion to new ſuſpicions and new complaints on the part of the catholic powers. It often happens that a ſingle prominent defect leads to very ſerious faults, and to misfortunes that are not always occaſioned even by the moſt odious vices. The vanity of Pius VI. accounts for almoſt all his errors, and was the moſt abundant ſource of his calamities. He was rapacious, becauſe he was determined to have, at any price, the means of rendering his pontificate brilliant, and of immortaliſing his name. Hence that oppreſſion, and thoſe immoderate iſſues of paper money, which, by exciting the diſcontent of his ſubjects, facilitated at leaſt, if it did not immediately occaſion, his fall.

CHAPTER X.

Cauſes of the Overthrow of the Roman Government.

THE grievances, then, of which the Roman people complained, were but too well founded, and in another country they might have had the moſt ſerious conſequences. But with ſuch ſubjects as the Romans, the danger of an inſurrection might appear to be remote. Still, more patient than their anceſtors in the days of their degeneracy, they could even go without *bread*, provided they were amuſed with *ſhows*; and in this reſpect, modern Rome was ſtill better treated than the Rome of antiquity. What a variety, what a multitude of diverſions it afforded to ignorance, frivolity, and ſloth! Every day produced a repetition of what paſſed once in the ſquare of St. Mark at Venice, when a miſſionary, jealous of the ſucceſs of the maſter of a puppet-ſhow, found no other means of calling off the numerous auditory of his rival, than by taking a crucifix from under his

his caſſock, and ſhaking it in the air, crying out: *Eccolo, eccolo, il vero policinello* †! At Rome there was a conſtant ſtruggle between the profane theatres and the churches. The prieſts were everlaſtingly in diſpute with the mountebanks. The only difference between them is that which exiſts between dull and entertaining abſurdity. Here, a juggler aſtoniſhed the multitude by his pretended prodigies: there, the crowd was dazzled by the illuſions of ſuperſtition. Their wondering eyes were now directed to the tricks of a conjurer; now to a Madonna, whom a fanatic monk ordered to weep: and while men of refined taſte paid for and reliſhed the ſongs of Metaſtaſio, and the melodious accents of Paeſiello, the mob went *gratis* to the opera at St. Peter's church. There was not a ſingle day for *ennui*; not a moment for miſchievous idleneſs.

And then the union of two powers, in a ſingle hand, was wonderfully calculated to render the abuſes of authority ſupportable. The Romans, ſuperſtitious in their nature, ſaw in their ſovereign a double individual; by turns, ridiculous and ſacred, odious and reſpectable. One day they curſed the prodigal, rapacious, and preſumptuous prince; the next they threw themſelves proſtrate before the vicar of Jeſus Chriſt; a proceſſion or a ſolemn benediction ſufficing to make them forget the dearth of proviſions. Their vanity was flattered with the idea of having within their walls the ſource of ſpiritual grace, the object of the homage of the whole catholic univerſe. They were dazzled with the pomp, at once religious and profane, which environed the pontiff; and each of them thought that he partook of his ſplendor.

This government, vicious as it was, flattered in many reſpects the paſſions of the multitude. In that immenſe hierarchy, which from the moſt obſcure ſacriſtan aroſe to the pope, they did not ſee a ſingle rank that they might not attain; and though there were in Rome certain great families for whom the pope was in a manner obliged to reſerve a few cardinals' hats, there was not a ſingle ſubject of the whole eccleſiaſtical ſtate who might not aſpire to the firſt dignities of the church, and hope to raiſe his family to an honourable ſtate. What was the origin of moſt of the cardinals? To ſay nothing of the famous ſhepherd of Montalto, who, in

† Look here, look here, here's the real punch for you!

in the laſt century, had been ſeen to riſe ſucceſſively from the loweſt condition to the pontifical throne. Was not Ganganelli of the moſt obſcure extraction? And what was Braſchi himſelf? A private gentleman of a diſtant province.

There were in the Roman government, then, two circumſtances which ſeemed, notwithſtanding ſo many cauſes of deſtruction, likely to enſure its duration; two circumſtances which have ſo much influence upon mankind; vanity, and ſuperſtition in its moſt dazzling pomp. The imagination of the vulgar repreſented it as ſomething ſupernatural; and their pride thence derived more than one kind of enjoyment. In the eccleſiaſtical ſtate, thanks to the climate, the natural wants are few, and are eaſily ſatisfied. In the capital there was ſo much food for curioſity, ſo many reſources for idleneſs, and ſo few rallying points for the diſcontented, that an inſurrection, organiſed in a dangerous manner, was next to impoſſible. Rome was, properly ſpeaking, the metropolis of Europe, the city of artiſts, amateurs, and foreigners. It would have been in vain to look there for the city of the Romans. Out of its whole population of about a hundred and ſixty thouſand ſouls, there were ſcarcely any natives, except the Tranſteverines, and the inhabitants of the quarter *dei Monti*; and they were preciſely the moſt rude and the moſt ſuperſtitious part of the populace. Among them, perhaps, might have been found the materials of a revolution: but who, among the other inhabitants of Rome, was intereſted in bringing one about? Was it the artiſts, who are naturally the friends of peace? The foreigners, who came to Rome in ſearch of information or pleaſure? The numerous eccleſiaſtics of every rank, who had all their career of ambition to run? The prelates, who might become cardinals? Or the cardinals, each of whom looked to the poſſibility of his attaining the papacy, and all of whom enjoyed a degree of conſideration that any revolution might have endangered? Every intereſt then concurred, if not to inſpire a love, at leaſt to counſel an endurance, of an order of things in which the exiſtence of all was implicated. It may alſo be ſaid, that the reign of a Roman pontiff, whatever he might be, muſt have appeared tolerable on other accounts. It was generally of ſhort duration, and conſequently left a door always open to hope. Men are naturally inclined to be patient, when they are every day upon the eve of a change

exempt

exempt from convulsion. Besides, the reign of the popes was seldom signalised by scandalous disorders, or by intolerable acts of oppression. Their age, the life they must naturally have led before they rose to supreme power, their habit of throwing a veil over their excesses, whenever they indulged in any; every thing, in short, contributed to divert them from those acts of violence which irritate a whole nation, and produce an unanimous outcry of indignation: and Pius VI., notwithstanding his defects, was not an exception to the general rule. He has given occasion, no doubt, to bitter complaints; but he is not reproached with those acts of despotism which engender rebellions, especially among a people little energetic, and occupied with its pious mummeries, and with its amusements. He found the government accustomed to mild measures; and he did not render it more severe. The agents of that government were often untrue to their trusts; but in their manners there was nothing repulsive. The nation certainly was not in a state of prosperity: it was wasting away in a deep decline; but it was a stranger to the pangs of acute disorders. It cannot be denied that justice was administered with partiality; but its dispensations were never severe. The laws were bad, or fallen into contempt; but they were not rigorous. The finances were in the greatest disorder. The taxes, by which the people almost always estimate their felicity, were comparatively light. Accordingly, a few years before the French revolution, at the time when the palpable errors of pope Braschi's reign began to strike every eye, his subjects used to say to travellers, even in the most remote provinces of the ecclesiastical state, in those that were the most distant from that splendor which dazzles the multitude, and makes them forget their misfortunes: "Yes, the mildness of our govern-
"ment makes us love it, defective as it is, and ridiculous
"as it may appear; and we should dread the consequences
"of a change. If we had a secular government, agricul-
"culture and the arts, perhaps, would flourish more;
"but we should have burdensome taxes; we should be a
"prey to extortion. Only see how the people in the du-
"chies of Modena and Parma are oppressed! No: none
"but the enemies of the public welfare can desire a change;
"for nowhere is there greater comfort. We are, it is true,
"subject to the caprices of a government which often
"changes; which is without any fixed plan as to the ex-
"portation

" portation of commodities ; and which ſometimes favours
" and ſometimes fetters it. But where is the adminiſtra-
" tion without its defects ? Where are the agents who may
" not be reproached with ſome abuſe of power † ?"

Elſewhere, judges, leſs indulgent, blamed the adminiſtration of Pius VI. ; but ſtill ſpoke handſomely of the Roman government. The preſent pope, ſaid they, has carried the abuſe, to which the people is moſt ſenſible, to greater lengths than his predeceſſors. The monopoly of corn, of oil, and of meat, is become more grievous than ever. We experience dearths, and ſometimes a real ſcarcity ; but at leaſt we have no wars, of which we are bound to bear the burden : nor have we any occaſion for extraordinary expenſes. The pope is covetous, it is true ; but he does not hoard up his money ; neither has he any intereſt in countenancing acts of oppreſſion. Our laws are not ſufficiently coercive ; and our tribunals are neither ſevere, nor even vigilant. Hence reſults a very bad police, and the impunity of crimes. But what inconveniences do we ſuffer that are not fully compenſated by the happineſs of never having threats or violence hanging over our heads ?

We do not pretend to prove by this that the Roman government was entirely contrary to the maxims of ſound philoſophy, or even to the dictates of reaſon alone. We only mean to ſay, that, if it had within it the elements of a ſlow, but inevitable deſtruction, it did not as yet excite, even under the reign of Pius VI., that violent diſcontent which provokes the people to a revolution.

It is then elſewhere, it is without that we muſt look for the principal cauſes of it ; and we ſhall find them much leſs in the endeavours of heretics, poets, and atheiſts, to undermine the pontifical throne, than in the conduct of the catholic powers in regard to the Holy See. Dupaty, in his letters concerning Italy, in which we meet with ſo many truths, expreſſed with ſo much ingenuity, that at firſt ſight they wear the appearance of paradoxes : Dupaty ſays, " the eccleſiaſtical ſtate was never ſo ſtable, as ſince it is ſo
" weak. Henceforth it has nothing to fear ; for henceforth
" it is no longer to be feared."—It wiſhed to become powerful again ; and did not know how to accommodate itſelf to circumſtances. It endeavoured to make a ſhew of ſtrength, and it fell to the ground.

This will be more fully explained in the following chapters

CHAPTER

† *See* Roland, Lettres écrites de Suiſſe et d'Italie, tom. v. p. 515.

CHAPTER XI.

Diſputes of the Holy See with the Court of Vienna.

AS long as Maria Thereſa lived, the court of Vienna preſerved an appearance of regard and reſpect for the Holy See. That princeſs, ſo great in ſeveral points of view, had, eſpecially towards the latter end of her life, contracted her mind in the ſwaddling-clothes of devotion. She had long conſidered the Jeſuits as the principal ſupport of religion. Other courts, the rivals of her's in impiety, had heavy cauſes of complaint againſt them, and ſolicited their deſtruction. Maria Thereſa thought ſhe made a great effort in not oppoſing it; and died, perhaps, regretting the ſociety of Jeſus.

The throne, which ſhe left vacant, was then occupied by an enterpriſing prince, fertile in projects of reform. Joſeph II., in ſpite of whatever ill-humour and envy may have ſaid, was a man of ſenſe and information, who wanted nothing but moderation and prudence to qualify him for the execution of great deſigns. He had long meditated under the guardianſhip of an imperious mother, far leſs philoſophical than himſelf, vaſt plans, the execution of which his impatience impelled him to haſten. Becauſe he had long reſolved them in his mind, he thought he had matured them; or rather, judging the reſt of Europe, and his ſubjects, by himſelf, he thought that every thing was ripe for his projects.

Scarcely had he begun his reign, when the reſpect of the court of Vienna for the Holy See perceptibly diminiſhed, as had been foreſeen. It is true that Pius VI. was ſo ill-adviſed to provoke this ſudden change. His greateſt embarraſſment was to reconcile the different marks of attention which he wiſhed to ſhew to the great powers, when they had oppoſite views. It was often impoſſible for him to yield to the demands of one, without diſpleaſing the reſt.

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He then had recourſe to thoſe *mezzo-termini*, which ſeldom fail to excite as much diſcontent in him to whom we yield, as in him whom we reſiſt. He had found himſelf in this unpleaſant dilemma towards the end of the reign of Maria Thereſa.

Pious as ſhe was, that princeſs carried all the weakneſſes of maternal vanity to the higheſt pitch; and to gratify them, even her religious ſcruples were for ſome time laid aſide. The archduke Maximilian, one of her ſons, had embraced the eccleſiaſtical profeſſion. It was not enough for her to have ſecured to him the electorate of Cologne; ſhe wiſhed alſo to add to it the biſhopric of Munſter, and ſeveral others. If the empreſs-queen had been left to herſelf, the houſe of Auſtria would in time have invaded all the rich prelatures in Germany, one after the other. The two courts of Verſailles and Madrin took umbrage at it; and the king of Pruſſia expreſſed his diſpleaſure. He even held out threats to the canons of Munſter. But it was at Rome, that under a pontiff leſs eaſily intimidated, and, above all, leſs eaſily ſeduced, the evil might have been cruſhed at its birth. France and Spain urged Pius VI. to refuſe the archduke the briefs of eligibility. They wiſhed him to oppoſe to the demands of the court of Vienna the holy canons, which forbade the plurality of benefices. It was thus that thoſe great powers, which gave ſuch frequent ſhocks to the authority of the Holy See, invoked it when it tended to favour their views. Pius VI. was in the greateſt perplexity. He did not dare too openly to thwart the court of Vienna. Why did not the other courts, which were able to contend with equal arms, undertake the troubleſome taſk? At the bottom of his heart he was not ſorry to ſee the great powers engaged in a diſpute. He was ſenſible, that if it be true, that the little have ſuffered by the follies of the great, it is not leſs true that the weak profit by their quarrels. But the weak do not always know how to avail themſelves of the advantages afforded them by circumſtances. The pope, wiſhing at once to keep well both with the houſe of Bourbon and the houſe of Auſtria, gave cauſe of complaint to one, without ſecuring the gratitude of the other.

The latter received from him at firſt a proof of condeſcenſion. He began by granting a diſpenſation to the archduke Maximilian, to enable him to take holy orders before he accepted the co-adjutorſhip of the archbiſhopric of Co-

logne, and of the biſhopric of Munſter. He had, however, courage enough to annex a condition to this favour. It was, that the archduke ſhould be applied for as co-adjutor by the elector himſelf; and that he ſhould procure himſelf a majority of votes in the two chapters; a vain formality, which the cabinet of Vienna was ſure to fulfil with eaſe. This act of apparent firmneſs did not prevent the cabinets of Verſailles and Madrid from being much diſpleaſed with his complaiſance; but the former, where the queen was all-powerful, was ſilent. The miniſter of Spain ſpoke with that energy which was conſiſtent with his character, and conformable to his inſtructions. Pius VI.. who feared him, heſitated for ſome time; but the court of Vienna laviſhed compliments upon the pontiff, and preſents upon his nephews and all the papal miniſtry, without even forgetting the loweſt officers in the chancery. The court of Vienna gained the day.

Theſe were the laſt friendly tranſactions between it and the Holy See. The death of Maria Thereſa followed cloſe after this little triumph; and from that moment it was foreſeen that the time of conciliatory meaſures was paſt. Pius VI. was ſenſible of this. He was acquainted with the character and principles of Joſeph II.; and he appeared to make it his buſineſs to accelerate the moment of rigour. This is one example of that inconſiſtency which often appeared during this pontificate.

It was a cuſtom eſtabliſhed at Rome, that the Pope ſhould pay funeral honours in his chapel to the catholic ſovereigns who were lately dead. Is it credible that Pius VI. refuſed this vain homage to the memory of Maria Thereſa? He had juſt derogated from the holy canons in favour of that princeſs; and yet he would not derogate, on her account, from a uſage of no conſequence in itſelf, and equally unconnected with divine worſhip, and with the diſcipline of the church. He perſiſted in maintaining that ſuch honours were never paid to queens: he affected to be ignorant that Maria Thereſa, who had reigned twenty years alone, ought to be aſſimilated to other ſovereigns. Beſides, of what conſequence was this derogation from cuſtom, compared with the giving of offence to a prince whoſe favour it was ſo much his intereſt to conciliate!

Joſeph II. had, in his turn, the weakneſs to be offended at this paltry ſhift; while Pius VI., deceiving all the calculations

culations of thoſe who thought they knew him, and rejecting the prudent counſels of his real friends, piqued himſelf upon braving the reſentment of the emperor. When cardinal Herzan, the Imperial miniſter, endeavoured to point out to him the inconveniences that might reſult from his incivility—*Well!* replied the pope in a paſſion, *I do not care whether the emperor be angry with this buſineſs, or whether he hold it in contempt.* Joſeph II. adopted the former part of the alternative; and when he ſigned a diſpatch, addreſſed by his chancery to the Imperial miniſter at the papal court, he added in his own hand-writing: *It is of little conſequence to me whether the biſhop of Rome be polite or uncivil;* and he thought himſelf completely revenged.

But this was not the only affront which he reſerved for the pope. The plan of Joſeph II. was, no doubt, formed, when he aſcended the throne of Maria Thereſa; and, in all probability, no change would have been effected in it by a funeral oration delivered by the pope. But the very trifling incident of its omiſſion had an immediate influence upon the manner of putting it into execution; and it was obſerved, that the emperor, while acting upon his great philoſophical principles, enjoyed the uneaſineſs that he was about to give to the ſovereign pontiff.

As early as the beginning of the year 1781, he ſpoke of introducing the maxims of the Gallican church into his dominions, of aboliſhing the plurality of benefices, and of granting greater liberty to the preſs. He ordered a ſtatement to be drawn up of all the eccleſiaſtical revenues of the Milaneſe, and of the ſtate of Mantua. This was bringing the ſubject of alarm cloſe home to the Holy See. Joſeph II. intermingled ſome traits of puerile animoſity with the notification of theſe dreadful meaſures. He was in hopes of vexing Pius VI. by taking a confeſſor from among theEx-jeſuits. He was not then as yet acquainted with his ſecret ſentiments.

Soon after, he proceeded from words and preliminary meaſures to very ſerious reforms. In that very year he iſſued two edicts, ſubjecting to very troubleſome rules the admiſſion of briefs, bulls, and reſcripts, of the court of Rome. By another, he declared that in future the monaſtic orders ſhould not be exempt from the authority of the biſhops; and that the pope ſhould no longer have immediate juriſdiction over them. Pius VI. had at firſt ſufficient ſelf-

command to repreſs the anger he felt at theſe innovations. He wiſhed, he ſaid, to confine himſelf to paternal repreſentations. But he received, from all quarters, complaints to which it was neceſſary to attend. Rules of conduct were requeſted of him; and he thought he could not do otherwiſe than give them, when in fact he ſtood in need of them himſelf. A panic ſeiſed upon the whole eccleſiaſtical army; and ran from rank to rank to the commander in chief. The monks trembled in their cells. Their provincials conſulted the generals of orders who reſided at Rome. The latter addreſſed themſelves to the pope. They agreed with him that it was neceſſary to make head againſt the ſtorm; and, in purſuance of his advice, wrote thus to the ſubordinate chiefs: *Be mindful of the conſtitutions of your order, and of your duty.* The armies were in preſence of each other: the war was about to begin, without being declared.

Joſeph II. continued his reforms. He reduced the fees of chriſtenings and burials to one half. Pius VI. reſolved to try the effect of his paternal remonſtrances. The emperor anſwered drily to his nuncio: *I want no advice concerning the affairs of my own dominions, which regard only my own ſubjects, nor concerning matters which are merely of a temporal nature.*

All that Joſeph II. has ſince ſaid, all that he has ſince done relative to reforms in the diſcipline of the church, has been merely a commentary upon, or an application of, this phraſe. We ſhall indicate only the principal ones; all the reſt, with their tedious details, ſhould be abandoned to theologians and canoniſts.

The Jeſuits, the conſtant, zealous, and artful ſupporters of the Holy See, which had good reaſon to regret them, had inſerted in the ritual the principal clauſes of the two famous bulls, *In cœna Domini* and *Unigenitus*. This was a mean of keeping the eyes of the faithful conſtantly fixed upon the prerogatives of the court of Rome, of holding them up as eſſential parts of divine worſhip, and of obtaining from pious ſovereigns a kind of tacit acknowledgment of its pretenſions. Joſeph II. expunged theſe dangerous interpolations from all the rituals in his dominions.

He declared all the ſeminaries, and colleges of the miſſionaries, independent of the court of Rome.

Theſe

These were only distant attacks made upon his authority. They were followed by a more serious one, which was calculated to have an immediate effect; and upon which it was necessary to come to some resolution without delay. The emperor wrote to Pius VI. to request an indult, authorising him to present to all the bishoprics, and to sell the benefices of Lombardy. The embarrassment of the pope was great. Was it best to adopt vigorous measures, at the risk of provoking a schism? Or was it wiser to dissemble? That would be to dishonour his pontificate, and to draw upon himself the reproaches of the whole Catholic church. Already did the priests about his person blame his supineness, and endeavour to inflame his zeal. He was tempted to suspend the drawing up of all bulls for the hereditary dominions of the emperor; but some persons, who were better advised, observed to him, that Joseph II. was a man capable of dispensing with any thing that was not granted with a good grace. Complain in sceret, said they, at the foot of the crucifix, of the pretensions which the emperor sets up. Take what are called conservatory measures; but have a care how you proceed to refusals. Have you forgot the famous expression of Benedict XIV., your first protector, who said, when speaking of temporal sovereigns, *Do not let us discourage their making applications to us.*

But it was hard, it was disgraceful, to yield without resistance. Well, let us resist then, said Pius VI. but with the arms of mildness and of Christian charity. He replied then to the demand of an indult, by a respectful letter, in which he endeavoured to soften Joseph II. by flattering his vanity. I know very well, said he, that I shall obtain nothing; but it is always important to gain time.

The pope might be considered at that time as an object of pity. Almost all the sovereigns of Europe seemed to have conspired to torment him. France was almost the only one that gave him no cause of complaint, which added still more to the ascendancy of the cardinal de Bernis, and gave him an opportunity of speaking, at least with some transient success, the language which was most familiar to him, that of conciliation and peace. He employed it in order to sooth the pontiff's extreme irritation at the Imperial decree, which forbade any one to apply for dispensations to the court of Rome; and at another decree that appeared shortly after, obliging all the bishops in the hereditary dominions to promise

promiſe that they would obey every order which had already been iſſued by the emperor, or *which he might iſſue hereafter*. This decree was not unlike that of the Spaniſh inquiſition, which proſcribed *all* the works of Voltaire, as well thoſe which he had already compoſed, as *thoſe which he might compoſe in future*. It may eaſily be conceived that ſuch an injunction muſt appear at once ſcandalous and alarming to the Holy See, and to all its partiſans. But what was to be done? Was it by reſignation, or by reſiſtance, that the Roman Catholic church could be ſaved from the calamities by which it was threatened? Pius VI. waited with extreme anxiety for the anſwer of Joſeph II., relative to the indult. What cardinal Herzan ſaid to him beforehand, augured no good: "If your holineſs does not grant "what the emperor aſks, you may be aſſured that he will "preſent to all the benefices in Lombardy without your "conſent." Joſeph's anſwer arrived ſhortly after. It was affectionate, but energetic, and did not leave room for the ſmalleſt hope of a compromiſe. He was ſincerely deſirous of the holy father's conſent; but he did not think it at all neceſſary. His determination was irrevocable. He was reſolved to re-eſtabliſh the ſovereign authority, which the weakneſs of his predeceſſors had ſuffered to be infringed.

The pontiff grieved; deliberated; and was about to ſubmit. Hitherto he had ſhewn himſelf fiery in the extreme. His beſt friends no longer knew him: his phlegm and patience appeared to them ſupernatural. They found him diſpoſed to grant the fatal indult, provided Joſeph would promiſe to make no farther innovations.

Pius VI. was not yet acquainted with the emperor. He had ſeen him develop only a part of his vaſt plan. While he thought himſelf at the end of his ſorrows and ſacrifices, a new Imperial decree appeared, ſuppreſſing all the monaſteries, of which the monks, being merely contemplative, were neither uſeful as inſtructors of youth, as miſſionaries, nor as preachers. It alſo threw open all the convents of nuns, except thoſe who were engaged in the uſeful work of education.

Theſe were no ſmall triumphs to ſound philoſophy. They were thunder-bolts to the court of Rome. They provoked a reſolution which was not expected in France, and which took the cardinal de Bernis himſelf unprovided.

Pius VI. imagined, that if there were any means of converting the emperor, it was to go and viſit him in perſon at Vienna. The only perſons to whom he had intruſted the ſecret of this ſtrange project, were John Francis Albani, dean of the Sacred College, a man of abilities and influence, to whom it was neceſſary to ſhew ſome deference, cardinal Gerdyl, the pope's privy counſellor in every thing relative to theology, and cardinal Pallavicini, on whom he beſtowed neither confidence nor friendſhip; but who, as ſecretary of ſtate, naturally had a right to be intruſted with the project.

It was the court of Vienna which ſent the firſt advice of it to that of Verſailles. The latter thought the idea extravagant, and calculated to bring the Catholic religion and the head of the church into contempt. As to the cardinal de Bernis, he obſtinately refuſed to believe it; and the meaſure was already announced at Vienna, when cardinal Conti, ſecretary of briefs, told the miniſters of France and Spain that he intended to aſk the pope's permiſſion to communicate to them *a very great piece of news*. Bernis and the chevalier Azara knew not for ſome time what to conjecture. Of all the projects which the pope could have conceived, that of a journey to Vienna appeared the leaſt probable. Their ſurpriſe was extreme when they were made acquainted with the brief which Pius VI. had addreſſed to the emperor, to announce to him that he was determined to pay him a viſit, in order to ſettle in perſon the points on which they were at variance; and that neither his age, nor the length of the journey ſhould deter him from taking a ſtep which could not fail, he hoped, to re-eſtabliſh good harmony between them.

This brief had been delivered to Joſeph II. by the nuncio Garampi; and its contents were at firſt to be kept ſecret. As ſoon as it was divulged at Vienna, through the indiſcretion of the Venetian ambaſſador, it became the ſubject of the moſt malignant reflections. No one would ever have expected the haughty Vatican to take ſo humiliating a ſtep. What a triumph for the emperor's vanity! What a mortification for the Holy See! At Rome the ſame language was held by all ranks of men. They could not pardon the pope's friends for having given him ſuch baſe advice. What more could the enemies of his repoſe and glory have done!

The

The emperor himſelf was far from expecting ſuch a reſolution on the part of the pope; but he diſſembled his aſtoniſhment. Endeavours were made to alarm him, by obſerving to him that the preſence of the ſovereign pontiff might heat the minds of fanatics, and oppoſe dangerous obſtacles to the uſeful reforms he had undertaken. He contemned ſuch empty terrors. He was accuſtomed to brave dangers; and thoſe appeared to him no wiſe formidable. He therefore ſent an affectionate anſwer to Pius VI., in which, after having ſtarted ſome obliging objections relative to his health, he applauded his intention. He acknowledged that nothing was more likely to bring two princes, who had any diſpute to ſettle, to a good underſtanding, than a perſonal interview.

Some people did Pius VI. the honour to believe that his propoſal of going to Vienna was no more than an empty demonſtration, from which he had expected a good effect; that he was in hopes it would be taken as a ſtriking proof of his apoſtolical zeal; and that he would be compared to the good ſhepherd in the goſpel, who went in ſearch of his loſt ſheep; but that he depended on the emperor's not taking him at his word. Thoſe who knew Pius VI. well, thought him perfectly incapable of ſuch a calculation. The truth was, that, depending much upon his eloquence, and upon his other means of ſeduction, he flattered himſelf that he ſhould not meet with a perſonal refuſal from the emperor; that his preſence would awaken the zeal of the German biſhops; and that his triumph would be infallible. Joſeph II. thought otherwiſe, and was juſtfied by the event. It is well known, that even before the departure of Pius VI. that prince expreſſed himſelf thus: "If the pope comes "only in hopes of obtaining from me the ſlighteſt change "in the ſyſtem I have adopted in eccleſiaſtical affairs, he "may ſpare himſelf the trouble of ſo long a journey."

Several months ſtill paſſed between the acknowledgment required by Joſeph II. and the departure of Pius VI., and that time was ſpent in intrigues, conjectures, and attempts to ſhake his reſolution. It was exceedingly unpleaſant to the eldeſt of his nephews. The pope, in his opinion, was expoſing himſelf to everlaſting ridicule; and then, reverting to himſelf, he ſaw his fortune endangered, in caſe his uncle ſhould happen to die upon the road. What was to become of thoſe brilliant enterpriſes that did ſo much honour

to

to his pontificate? Yes, cried he mournfully, the pope is guided by perfidious counſels. His enemies wiſh to kill him with chagrin and ſhame.

Bernis, who ſincerely intereſted himſelf in his glory and peace, hoped that it was ſtill time to diſſuade him; and, without taking offence at his reſerve, which did not ſo much indicate a want of confidence as the dread with which he was inſpired by the auſterity of his advice, addreſſed to him a preſſing letter to the following effect:

"Every body is of opinion that you are about to take "an improper ſtep, which, without being of the ſmalleſt "advantage to the Holy See, will be a diſgrace to the pon- "tifical dignity. Even at Rome, it is already turned into "ridicule. Now you know with what effect that weapon "is uſed againſt religion and its miniſters. Thoſe who are "about your perſon dare not oppoſe your wiſhes. They "are ill acquainted with the ſpirit of courts, and the ſpirit "of the age. For heaven's ſake then, holy father, ſuſpend "the execution of your project, till you know the ſenti- "ments of the courts of France and Spain, and of ſuch "others whoſe opinion ought to have any weight with you, "&c."

This leſſon, although a little ſevere, was well received; for Pius VI., in ſpite of his habitual obſtinacy, was not offended with remonſtrances, which he was convinced were made with a good intention; but his flatterers gained the day; and among thoſe there were probably ſome ambitious prieſts, who were in hopes that the pontiff's chagrin would ſoon occaſion a vacancy in the Holy See. They were not as yet acquainted with that happy impaſſibility, which kept him in an excellent ſtate of health in the midſt of ſtorms, and has ſince enabled him to ſurvive the greateſt calamities. Pius VI., however, was pleaſed to enter into a ſort of diſcuſſion with the cardinal de Bernis. His great argument was, that he had made a promiſe to the emperor, who had taken him at his word. He quoted with much complacency the affectionate expreſſions of that prince.—"But you ſee," replied his ſincere friends, "that the emperor tells you be- "forehand, that nothing is capable of making him change "his determination. Why then ſhould you take ſo degrad- "ing a ſtep to no purpoſe?"

This reflection made him heſitate for ſome time. To ſatisfy his mind completely, he came to the reſolution of

conſulting ſeven cardinals ſeparately. They all gave their opinion in writing, and unknown to each other; and all of them voted for the journey to Vienna. This unanimity appeared to the ſuperſtitious pontiff to be altogether ſupernatural. Thus it was that formerly the verſion of the Septuagint was dictated by the Holy Ghoſt itſelf. A ſingle cardinal had, however, been of opinion, that it might, *perhaps*, be worth while to conſult the catholic courts. But the pope pretended that the delay which would reſult from following this ſingle opinion would *irritate the emperor*; and beſides, that the catholic courts might be afraid of involving themſelves in ſome difficulty with that prince. He had, in his own opinion, irrefutable anſwers to all objections. Did any one ſpeak to him of the dangers he might incur, or at leaſt of the affronts to which he was going to expoſe himſelf, he replied with an air of ingenuous zeal, that might have been intereſting if the deſire of acquiring celebrity by ſo ſtriking a meaſure, and of exhibiting his perſon, had not been uppermoſt among the motives of his conduct; he replied: "I am going to Vienna, as I would go to martyrdom. "For the intereſt of religion, we ought to expoſe even our "lives. We are not at liberty to abandon the veſſel of the "church in the moſt violent ſtorms." When any one pointed to him the raillery of which he was ſure to be the object: "It matters little," ſaid he, "whether the Imperial "miniſters turn me into ridicule: their ſentiments are well "known (this was particularly pointed at M. de Kaunitz). "Do we not know that we are bound to ſuffer for the ſake "of Jeſus Chriſt?"

This latter fear was principally excited by his oſtentatious devotion, which afforded ample ſcope to ridicule; by his want of knowledge of the cuſtoms of the world, and by ignorance of every thing that did not immediately relate to eccleſiaſtical affairs. The perſons who were to attend him on his journey were by no means calculated to guard him againſt the commiſſion of follies and faults. He took with him the abbe Ponzetti, his confeſſor, a ſpy of the ſociety of the Jeſuits, who was infected with extravagant principles, and who had wit enough to make him dangerous; a patriarch Marucci, and an archbiſhop Conteſſini, both of them ſtrongly tinctured with Jeſuitiſm, as well as the reſt of his retinue; and to render the abſurdity complete, the prelate Dini, his maſter of the ceremonies, the man who had inſiſted the moſt

moſt ſtrenuouſly upon denying funeral honours to Maria Thereſa, was likewiſe of the party.

The pope concluded his reply to the cardinal de Bernis, by telling him that he was going as ſoon as poſſible to pay a viſit to the emperor, according to the promiſe he had lately made.

Bernis was not diſcouraged. He combated the reſolution of Pius VI. with new remonſtrances. "Do not con- "fide ſolely in thoſe whom you have conſulted. There "are in the ſacred college others capable of giving you ad- "vice. Thoſe even, by whoſe apparent opinion you regu- "late your conduct, hold a very different language when "they are not in your preſence. Beſides, are theologians "good judges of decorum and political propriety? Rely "rather upon thoſe who have ſome knowledge of the world "and of courts. Your nuncio at Vienna is in a difficult "ſituation; and it is natural that he ſhould wiſh you to "come to his aſſiſtance. You are going to give the ſignal "of a paper war, to give birth to a diſcuſſion which the "very intereſt of religion requires you to avoid. Does not "the true welfare of the church conſiſt in peace and con- "cord?" The cardinal de Bernis concluded this affecting note by a phraſe ſuitable to his profeſſion: *Triſtis eſt anima mea uſque ad mortem.*

But the reſolution of Pius VI. was taken, and nothing could move him. When his determination appeared irrevocable, his ſincere friends, who were not numerous, expreſſed their opinion of it to the following effect: "A par- "ticular kind of enthuſiaſm, a fondneſs for extraordinary "things, a miſtaken zeal, a little too much vanity and pre- "ſumption, bad advice given for the moſt part with an evil "intention, and a complete ignorance of the world and of "courts, have prevailed over good ſenſe, friendſhip, and "the true intereſts of the church and of the Holy See. God "is not obliged to counteract by miracles the imprudence "of his vicars."

Till the laſt moment his friends were in hopes that the projected journey would not take place; that by ſome pretext, either on one ſide or the other, this ſingular interview would be eluded; but each party thought himſelf bound by his word. Every thing, even to his religious ſcruples, confirmed the pope in his reſolution; for he knew that Joſeph had ſaid to Garampi, the nuncio, "His holineſs is obliged

to

" to come and confer with me, if he does not wiſh to for-
" feit his word, and to devote himſelf to ridicule and re-
" probation."

Pius VI. therefore made very ſerious preparations for his journey. It was his firſt intention to travel *incognito*, under the name of *Biſhop of St. John of Lateran*, to alight at Vienna at the palace of his nuncio, and thence to repair to the caſtle of Schoenbrun, where apartments were to be provided for him. But Joſeph II., under an appearance of religious reſpect for the head of the church, was not ſorry to add every circumſtance of parade to the homage that was about to be paid him. He inſiſted that the pontiff ſhould lodge in his palace at Vienna; and ordered an apartment, ſuperbly furniſhed, to be prepared for his reception. In the oratory, which he intended for his uſe, he had a magnificent altar erected, and took care to lay upon it holy relics, and a crucifix of great value; the very crucifix which was ſaid to have ſpoken to one of his predeceſſors, Ferdinand II. The emperor wiſhed to flatter the pope's devotion, and at the ſame time to evince his own.

On the 25th day of February, Pius VI held a conſiſtory, in which, among other regulations, he ſettled that the reins of government ſhould, during his abſence, be committed to the hands of the cardinal-vicar Colonna. Foreſeeing the poſſibility of his dying before his return, he annulled the bull, *Ubi papa, ibi Roma;* and ordered by a brief, that the conclave for the choice of his ſucceſſor ſhould be held at Rome, even if he ſhould happen to die in any diſtant part. The health of cardinal Pallavicini, the ſecretary of ſtate, being at that time precarious, he nominated, in a ſealed note, the perſon who was to ſucceed him in caſe of his demiſe.

After the cares required by the church, thoſe due to affection occupied his mind. He ſent for his nephew, count Oneſti, and delivered to him his laſt will. " If I die dur-
" ing my journey," ſaid he, " you will here find my final
" intentions. Remember me in your prayers. Farewell!"
—The nephew ſeemed much affected; and the pope, who wept in circumſtances leſs moving, turned aſide to hide his tears.

The holy apoſtles were not to be forgotten on the eve of ſo important a meaſure. On the 26th of February, during the ſilence of the night, Pius VI. deſcended to their tombs,

under

under the principal altar of St. Peter's church, piouſly implored their aſſiſtance, and performed divine worſhip. With ſuch preparations, he could not fail to have a proſperous journey.

CHAPTER XII.

The Pope's Journey to Vienna.

THE following day was fixed for the departure of Pius VI. Early in the morning he repaired to the Vatican; offered up his prayers to the deity; afterwards went to St. Peter's; there heard maſs; and then retired to that pompous ſacriſty, built and decorated, by his orders, at ſuch great expenſe. It was there that he took leave of the heirs to the throne of Ruſſia, of the count and counteſs du Nord, who, a few days before, had returned from Naples. They made him a preſent of a ſuberb *peliſſe*, and attended him to his carriage. Pius VI. ſeemed very ſenſible of theſe delicate marks of attention ſhewn to him by a ſchiſmatic prince and princeſs, at a time, when he had ſo little reaſon to be ſatisfied with the court of Naples, and the grand duke of Tuſcany, and when he was ſetting off on a journey undertaken in order to mollify the rigour of the firſt catholic monarch in Europe. At length he got into his carriage, in the preſence of an immenſe crowd, who with loud cries implored his laſt benediction. The moſt noiſy acclamations accompanied him through all the ſtreets of Rome, and to the end of the firſt ſtage. He might at that time have miſtaken the ſentiments with which he inſpired his ſubjects. The good wiſhes that he carried away with him ſeemed ardent, ſincere, and unanimous; but who does not know the nature of the populace, and eſpecially of the populace of Rome?

Among the preparations for the journey, nothing was forgotten that might ſerve for the perſonal decoration of the ſovereign pontiff, or exhibit his munificence. He took with

with him the tiara, and two croſiers magnificently ornamented, which were generally depoſited at the caſtle of St. Angelo; for it was his intention to diſplay at Vienna all the pomp of the pontifical dignity. He was provident enough to take with him alſo four cardinals' hats, deſtined for the German prelates whom he purpoſed to inveſt with the Roman purple. He ordered a thouſand gold medals to be ſtruck, each worth fifteen crowns, and bearing on one ſide a repreſentation of the holy apoſtles, and on the other his own portrait. Theſe he diſtributed on the road. Eighty thouſand Roman crowns were ſet apart to defray the expenſes of the whole journey.

All this parade might dazzle fools, but it did not diminiſh the humiliation attendant upon the ſtep taken by the pope. How unlike was Pius VI. to that pontiff who ſet the Imperial crown upon the head of Charlemagne; to the arrogant Gregory VII., who left the excommunicated emperor Henry IV. ſuppliant, and expoſed to the inclemency of the weather for ſeveral nights, in the ditch of the caſtle of Canoſſa; and to the fiery Innocent IV., proſcribing Frederic II., releaſing his ſubjects from the oath of fidelity, and ſucceſsfully oppoſing the thunder of the Vatican to the triumph of that warlike prince. Pius VI. was far from being that imperious, that outrageous fanatic; but he was expiating the inſolence of his predeceſſors; while Joſeph II., under an appearance of urbanity, was avenging the affronts that had been offered to his.

Pius VI. conſidered his journey as a mere proof of his apoſtolical zeal; and feaſted his vanity upon the homage he was about to receive in the courſe of his long route.

Before he quitted Rome he performed a laſt act of devotion. He ſtopped at the door of the fathers of the oratory of Santa Maria di Vellicella, offered up a prayer, ſtepped again into his carriage, and finally departed by the gate called *La porta del popolo.*

The principal noblemen of Rome, accompanied him as far as Otricoli, a ſmall town, ſince rendered famous by our victories over the Neapolitans. It was there that his nephew, the prelate Braſchi, and the governor of Rome took leave of him. Wiſhing to give the Ruſſian prince and princeſs a laſt proof of kindneſs, and, though abſent, to do the honours of his capital, he ſent orders from Otricoli to entertain them

them with an illumination of St. Peter's church, and an exhibition of fire-works in the caſtle of St. Angelo.

On the third day he arrived at Tolentino, at that place, where, fourteen years afterwards, he was for ſome ſhort time to preſerve his throne by painful ſacrifices. It is there that reſt the bones of a ſaint held in high veneration in the country, and known to the devout of Europe by the name of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino. A warlike prince, when he travels, viſits fortreſſes and celebrated camps. A philoſophical prince goes to obſerve, and to encourage uſeful public eſtabliſhments. The travels of a pope are one continual pilgrimage, excepting, indeed, the cuſtomary penance and privations. Pius VI. went every where to worſhip bones, to celebrate miracles, to offer up prayers, to beſtow benedictions, to hold out his ſlipper to be kiſſed by a few privileged perſons, and his hand by every body; and this is what will be called an apoſtolical journey.

His route led him to our Lady of Loretto. He made a pauſe before the ſacred image; admired the brilliant offerings with which oſtentatious devotion had enriched it, and added to them his own. Every where the devout and the curious crowded round him; every where the prelates and dignitaries of the court of Rome haſtened from all quarters to ſwell his retinue; and every where the pontiff, ſurrounded by glory, diſtributed his benedictions with no ſparing hand.

In his way to Ceſena, his native place, he was obliged to paſs that river which is ſo famous in the hiſtory of the Roman republic. The ſight of it awakened ideas, which flattery did not fail to turn to account. Formerly, ſaid his adulators, Cæſar paſſed the Rubicon to make war upon Rome: the pope is now paſſing it to offer peace to Cæſar. This compariſon would have ſufficed to conſole the vanity of Pius VI.; but as yet it did not ſtand in need of conſolation.

At Ceſena, he found himſelf ſurrounded by his family of both ſexes, and of all ages. The ſevere *étiquette*, which conſtantly inſulates the ſovereign pontiff, was laid aſide; and men, women, and children, were admitted to his table. He appeared to be much moved by this aſſemblage; but he was, perhaps, ſtill more ſenſibly affected, upon perceiving the arrival of count Zambeccari, one of the forty

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ſenators of Bologna, appointed miniſter plenipotentiary by the king of Spain, to compliment him on his journey.

Charles III. wrote to him with his own hand: "I envy "the emperor," ſaid he, "the happineſs which he is about "to derive from your company at Vienna. I ſhould deſire "nothing ſo much as to enjoy the like." Such is the language of courts. It is well known that the ridiculous journey of the pope was not leſs diſapproved of at Madrid than at Verſailles; but Charles III. was not undeſerving of the title of catholic king, and felt *his royal heart* much intereſted in the honour of the Holy See.

On his arrival at Imola the following morning (the 8th of March), Pius VI. received the homage of another crowned head. The king of Sardinia ſent ſeveral noblemen of his court to compliment him. The next day, the pious duke of Parma came to perform the ſame duty in perſon. He kiſſed the pontiff's hand and ſlipper, and returned contented.

The pope found at Ferrara one of the emperor's life-guards, who was come from Vienna to meet him. The day after his departure from Rome, the emperor's anſwer, which he did not chooſe to wait for, had arrived: it was as affectionate as the firſt; but it deprived him, nevertheleſs, of the hope of effecting any change in the emperor's plans. Many perſons regretted that he had not deferred his departure for four and twenty hours, thinking that this anſwer would, perhaps, have cured him. They were but little acquainted with Pius VI. Obſtinate and preſumptuous, he could ſee nothing in the emperor's letter but what was calculated to flatter his vanity. Joſeph, after repeating that he was immoveably fixed in his reſolutions, added the following words: —*I expect your viſit; but I beg you to accept the uſe of my palace, which will be much more convenient both for you and for me; ſince, as we ſhall have a great many things to diſcuſs together, we muſt not let the prying public have the malicious pleaſure of counting the number of our interviews.*

Joſeph had hoped that Pius VI. would divine his ſecret intentions. But when he heard that he had taken his letter in the literal ſenſe, and that he was ſet off from Rome, his whole thoughts were occupied in preparing for him the moſt dazzling reception. The courier whom he diſpatched, had orders not to ſtop till he met him. The letters which he delivered to the pope announced that the emperor had fitted up an apartment for him in his reſidence at Vienna,

enna, which was the very ſame that had been occupied by the late empreſs, and that he might expect a reception worthy of his ſupreme rank. Pius VI. could not conceal his ſatisfaction. He enjoyed, by anticipation, the tributes of reſpect and love with which he was about to be overwhelmed. After quitting Ferrara, and arriving upon the banks of the Po, he found the bucentaur, which the ſenate of Venice had ordered to be prepared for his accommodation, and an immenſe crowd waiting for him by the ſide of the river. In this manner he was conducted to the place where the Adige falls into the Po; and thence to the iſland of Chiozza, where he was complimented by the Venetian prelates, the doge, and the ſenate, repreſented by the two procurators of St. Mark, who accompanied him to the frontiers of the Venetian ſtate. The Sacred College was much afraid leſt Pius VI., led away by a thirſt of honours, ſhould be tempted to appear in the capital of the republic. According to the cardinals, the Venetians did not deſerve ſuch an attention on the part of the ſovereign pontiff. For a long time paſt they had ſhewn very little reſpect to the Holy See; and it was they who had ſet the emperor examples which he had but too well followed.

For this once Pius VI. ſpared the Sacred College that additional vexation. He contented himſelf with travelling through the whole Venetian ſtate, leaving Venice very near him upon his right. When he arrived at the canals of the lake, from whence there is a proſpect of the *queen of the ſeas*, he found a great number of boats and gondolas, which ſcarcely left room for the richly decorated veſſels on board of which he was received. At the ſight of him the whole crowd fell proſtrate, and craved and obtained his benediction. The women wept with joy, and all the neighbouring trees bent beneath the weight of curious ſpectators. At length he diſembarked at Malgara, and found the ſteps of the landing-place covered with a rich carpet. The biſhop of Treviſo was waiting for him at the top of them, and conducted him to Meſtre, where he was received by all the great perſonages of the environs, by the ambaſſadors of Spain and Auſtria, and by his own nuncio, all come from Venice in order to catch a benediction as he paſſed. After making ſome ſtop at Treviſo, he croſſed the Piava over a bridge built on purpoſe for him, and the Tagliamento, in a boat magnificently ornamented; and at length arrived at Udina, the laſt town of that republic, the government of

which affected to prove to him that it was as ready to pay empty homage to the perſon of the head of the church, as it was backward in ſhewing marks of deference to his authority.

At length he reached the frontiers of the dominions of a ſovereign, far more formidable in his caprices, who was preparing to adminiſter to him the ſame conſolation. On the 14th of March he arrived at Goertz, or Goritz, the firſt town in Auſtria. He found there Garampi, the nuncio, count Cobenzel, the emperor's vice-chancellor, a ſquadron of the life-guards, and ſeveral Auſtrian noblemen. Every thing promiſed him the moſt brilliant reception; but his joy was a little diſturbed when he learnt that the archbiſhop of Goertz had juſt been ſent for to Vienna to receive a ſevere reprimand. He was about to expiate his blind devotion to the Holy See. He had refuſed to publiſh the edicts of toleration in his dioceſe, and had dared to appeal to Rome. Pius VI. pretty well concealed his painful feelings at this firſt proof of Joſeph's inflexibility, and uttered theſe remarkable words, from which the perſons preſent drew various inferences:—*It is very right; the ſovereign's orders ſhould be punctually obeyed.* But thoſe who record the words of great perſonages ſhould be accompanied by a muſician and a painter; one to note down the tone in which they are ſpoken, the other to pourtray the features of the ſpeaker: we ſhould then know in what way they ought to be interpreted. Upon the arrival of the archbiſhop of Goertz at Vienna, a very embarraſſing alternative was propoſed to him. "Sign one of theſe two writings," ſaid the ſevere commiſſion before which he was ſummoned. The one was the reſignation of his archbiſhopric; the other an oath of obedience to the emperor's orders. A day which he aſked for conſideration not being granted him, he ſigned the oath, confeſſed that he groſsly diſobeyed the emperor's orders, and threw himſelf upon his clemency. He afterwards received a ſevere reprimand; was obliged to liſten to a long lecture concerning the duty of biſhops towards their ſovereign; and received orders to repair to his dioceſe, without ſo much as ſeeing Pius VI., who had arrived in the mean time, and to take care that the edicts he had ſuſpended were put in execution. He was beſides threatened with a heavy fine if he made the ſmalleſt delay, and condemned to pay fifteen hundred florins a year for the ſupport of a pious foun-

foundation. The pope was certainly bound to intercede for him with the emperor; but his entreaties were of no avail. How ill did this augur to the ſucceſs of his apoſtolical journey!

But let us continue to follow him upon the road to Vienna. On his arrival at Laybach, in Carniola, he found there the archduchefs Mary-Anne, the emperor's eldeſt ſiſter, whom devotion had brought from her convent of Clagenfurt to the feet of the ſovereign pontiff. She was going to proſtrate herſelf before him in reality. The pope haſtened to raiſe her, but could not prevent her from kiſſing his hand; and much were the pious ſpectators edified by the humble devotion of the princeſs, and the modeſt and kind demeanor of the pontiff. The religious homage of the archduchefs was the better received, as the reſt of the family had given ſo much vexation to Pius VI., and held out to him a proſpect of more. He intimated his alarms to the illuſtrious confidant, who repaid his abundant benedictions with the only thing ſhe had at her diſpoſal—fruitleſs wiſhes, and vain words of encouragement.

At Laybach, at Marburg, and at Gratz in Stiria, he found himſelf ſurrounded by the ſame concourſe of curious people and devotees. In the firſt of thoſe cities he walked during a whole hour between two thick rows of ſpectators. At Gratz the public curioſity was ſtill greater; the crowd preſſed very cloſe to him; every one wiſhing to kiſs, or at leaſt to touch the ſacred veſtments of the pontiff. In the midſt of all this homage, how was it poſſible to ſuppoſe that he was no more than a man! Accordingly Pius VI. identified himſelf with him whoſe vicar he called himſelf; and ſeeing that attempts were made to keep off the crowd of the faithful, pronounced with pious pride theſe words of St. Mark: *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.*

Pius VI. was not far from the gates of Vienna, and the tribute of reſpect was about to become ſtill more ſtriking. Joſeph II. could not prevent his malignity from adding to it ſome ſarcaſms, both in words and actions. He ſent to meet him three nobles of the Hungarian guard, who were to ſerve him as couriers; and to accuſtom the pope to his principles of toleration, choſe them out of the three religions eſtabliſhed in Germany. One was a Catholic, the other a Lutheran, the third a Calviniſt. Cardinal Megazzi, archbiſhop of Vienna, when ſetting off to meet him, aſked the

emperor if the bells of the capital were to be rung at the moment of the pope's making his entry. *A fine queſtion indeed*, anſwered Joſeph, *are not the bells your artillery?*

The emperor and his brother Maximilian went to meet the pontiff as far as Neunkirchen, a town at a few leagues diſtance from Vienna. As ſoon as they perceived his carriage, they alighted; the pope haſtened to do the like, and the greetings on both ſides were very affectionate. The pope embraced the emperor, and gave him three fraternal kiſſes. The ſpectators even thought they obſerved the tears ſtanding in the eyes of both the eminent perſonages; one of whom wept eaſily, and the other when he pleaſed. The emperor took the pope into his carriage, and ſeated him on his right hand; and during their entry into Vienna, which was pompous and noiſy (it was on the 22d of March 1782), the holy father did not ceaſe to beſtow the treaſures of his benediction upon an immenſe crowd of the faithful, intoxicated with joy and devotion.

The pope, enchanted with his reception, was deſirous that, even before they arrived at Vienna, his auſtere, but real friends, Bernis and Azara, ſhould partake of his ſatisfaction. He ſent them word, through the medium of cardinal Pallavicini, that he received upon every occaſion the moſt flattering teſtimonies of the emperor's affection. Hence, by his account, it was natural to conclude that Joſeph was pleaſed with his journey, and moſt favourably diſpoſed towards him. Theſe two intelligent miniſters would have been diverted by his preſumption, if their regard for him had been leſs ſincere.

They heard with pleaſure that he had ſucceeded perfectly well in his *début* at Vienna. His appearance was conſidered as highly prepoſſeſſing; his manners were thought a happy mixture of dignity, affability, and modeſty. It was well known, however, that Joſeph II., who, in ſpite of his great qualities, ſometimes exhibited a littleneſs of mind, had taken offence at the acclamations he had met with on his route. It was well known that he was particularly vexed at finding that the pope had taken the liberty of reprimanding the biſhops who had publiſhed his imperial decrees with affected good-will. He did not even diſguiſe from him his ſentiments on that head; but that was a circumſtance Pius VI. took great care to conceal. A few days after his arrival at Vienna, he wrote to the cardinal de Bernis, and dwelt much

much upon the entertainments given him by the emperor, and upon the compliments he received from him; but not a word did he ſay of his negotiation. He enjoined the ſame ſilence to all who accompanied him; but the true cauſes of this reſerve were well underſtood at Rome.

The cardinals were of opinion that he had done a great deal too much for the republic of Venice, of which he had ſo great reaſon to complain. They laughed at the importance he attached to popular acclamations, and to thoſe empty homages of *étiquétte* which make no alteration in matters of importance. They were afraid that, blinded by his vanity, he would enter into ſome diſgraceful capitulation "We would much rather," ſaid they, "that he ſhould re-"turn without having obtained any thing, than that he ſhould repay the fine words and wheedling of the emperor, by giving up any part whatever of the prerogatives of the Roman church." They had not yet ſounded the depth of the abyſs that environed the Holy See. The people of Rome were ſtill more ſtupidly obſtinate in their fanaticiſm. They were heard to ſay, *St. Peter will not abandon him. If the emperor refuſes to comply with the demands of the pope, he will be ſtruck blind.* In reality, Joſeph II. had at this time bad eyes; and was eleven days without ſeeing the pope, or without being able to communicate with him otherwiſe than by writing. The Romans already began to triumph; but a prudent regimen, and the oculiſts of Vienna gave the lie to the prophecy.

We refer to the newſpapers of the times thoſe who wiſh to be informed of the minute details of the pope's ſtay at Vienna, and are deſirous of knowing to what religious ceremonies, and to what feſtivals, the thirty-one days that he paſſed there were devoted. Suffice it for us to ſay, that the emperor ſtudiouſly diſplayed before the eyes of the pontiff every thing that could give him a high idea of the magnificence of his capital, or tend to excite his admiration of his palaces, his galleries of pictures, his manufactures, and his public eſtabliſhments; while Pius VI. was in like manner anxious to exhibit all the pompous ceremonies of the Roman religion, in order to dazzle the eyes of the ſuperſtitious Auſtrians with every thing that renders the head of the catholic church awful to the vulgar. He does not appear to have failed in his object. The attention he attracted at Vienna was very great, if we may judge by the report of

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all the eye-witneſſes, particularly by what a Lutheran, whoſe teſtimony cannot be ſuſpicious, wrote at the time to one of his friends. "The effect of the pope's preſence at Vienna," ſaid he, "is wonderful; and I am not aſtoniſhed at its having formerly produced ſuch ſtrange revolutions. I have "ſeen the pontiff ſeveral times at the moment he was giving his benediction to the people of this capital. I am "not a catholic, neither am I eaſily moved; but I do aſſure "you that the ſight drew tears from me. You cannot conceive how intereſting it is to ſee more than fifty thouſand "perſons aſſembled in the ſame place by the ſame ſentiment, expreſſing in their looks and geſtures the devotion "and enthuſiaſm with which they wait for a benediction "that they conceive eſſential to their proſperity on earth, "and to their happineſs in another world. Entirely occupied with that idea, they were perfectly inſenſible to "the inconvenience of their ſituation. Crowded one againſt "another, and ſcarcely breathing, they ſaw the head of the "catholic church appear in all his pomp; the tiara on his "head, dreſſed in pontifical robes, ſacred in their eyes, and "magnificent in thoſe of every perſon, ſurrounded by all "the cardinals who happened to be then at Vienna, and "by all the dignified clergy. The pontiff bent down his "body towards the earth, raiſed his arms to heaven in the "attitude of a perſon firmly perſuaded that he is conveying "thither the vows of a multitude of men, and expreſſing "in his looks his ardent deſire that they may be heard. Let "any one figure to himſelf theſe functions performed by "an old man of a majeſtic perſon, and of the moſt noble "and pleaſing countenance; and let him, if he can, help "feeling a ſtrong emotion when he ſees this immenſe crowd "fall upon their knees at the moment the benediction is "given, and receive it with the ſame enthuſiaſm that ſeems "to animate him by whom it is beſtowed. For my part, I "confeſs that the impreſſion made upon me by this ſcene "will not be effaced while I live. How ſtrong and deep "muſt it then be in the minds of thoſe who are diſpoſed to "let themſelves be led away by external acts of devotion!"

The pope happened to be at Vienna during Paſſion and Eaſter weeks; the time of all others the moſt favourable for the diſplay of the ceremonies of the Roman catholic church. Joſeph availed himſelf of the circumſtance to deſtroy the prejudices

prejudices which his philoſophy had raiſed in the minds of the devout, and to prove that it was not incompatible with religion. He piouſly attended divine worſhip, which was performed with the greateſt imaginable pomp; and allowed the pope to have the honour of taking his place on that day, when, in celebrating the inſtitution of the Lord's Supper, the pride of ſovereign grandeur condeſcends to waſh the feet of twelve indigent old men, and to wait upon them at table. Joſeph himſelf ſelected theſe repreſentatives of the twelve apoſtles; one of whom was one hundred and ſix years of age. In the morning he received the ſacrament, as did his brother the archduke, from the hand of the ſovereign pontiff. They were afterwards preſent at the ceremony, but *incognito*. The pope, after bleſſing the diſhes, put them himſelf upon the table of the gueſts. He offered one to the emperor, who excuſed himſelf by ſaying that he was there merely as a ſpectator. Each of the poor men received twenty ducats from his hands, and two medals of gold and ſilver from thoſe of Pius VI. Eaſter Sunday was diſtinguiſhed by a grand ceremony of another kind. The pope celebrated high maſs with a degree of ſolemnity unexampled at Vienna. The two princes of Schwartzenberg and Averſperg waſhed his hands by turns. After the goſpel he delivered a diſcourſe in Latin, and had the double pleaſure of diſplaying his eloquence, and making an impreſſion upon the feelings of his auditors.

Notwithſtanding all the precautions of the police to prevent the accidents inevitable in ſuch crowds, the performance of theſe auguſt ceremonies gave occaſion to contuſions and broken arms; and more than once the great market-place was ſtrewed with loſt ſhoes and hats; but every thing was compenſated by the happineſs of beholding the pontiff, and of receiving his benediction. The eager deſire to get a ſight of him upon the road bordered upon phrenſy. The courſe of the Danube was often obſtructed by the multitude of boats going up and down, full of curious ſpectators. Crowds of twenty and thirty thouſand perſons aſſembled in the ſtreets that lead to the emperor's reſidence, calling with loud cries for the benediction of the pope. All the avenues to it were blocked up, and more than once a day Pius VI. was obliged to appear in his balcony, and to beſtow upon the impatient crowd the cheap favour which they implored with ſo much ardour. Scarcely were they thus diſmiſſed,

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when their place was occupied by another multitude ambitious of the ſame honour. The influx of ſtrangers into Vienna was ſo prodigious, that apprehenſions of a want of proviſions were for ſome time entertained. People crowded from the moſt remote parts of the hereditary ſtates. The whimſical obſtinacy of a peaſant was remarked, who was come ſixty leagues to ſee the pope. On his arrival he went and placed himſelf in one of the halls belonging to the apartment occupied by the pope. "What do you want here?" ſaid one of the guards.—"I wiſh to ſee the pope."—"You cannot ſee him here; begone about your buſi-"neſs!"—"No, no! I will wait till he comes, I am in "no hurry; go on with what you are about;" and upon this he ſat down, and ate his bread very quietly. He had been waiting in this manner for ſome hours; when the emperor, being informed of his perſeverance, himſelf introduced him to the pope, who received the honeſt villager very graciouſly, gave him his hand to kiſs, beſtowed on him his benediction, and alſo one of the medals which he had brought with him from Rome. *How cunning the people of Vienna are,* ſaid the peaſant, retiring with great ſatisfaction, *they take good care not to tell me the pope gave money to thoſe who went to ſee him.*

It was not his perſon alone that was the object of veneration. No one is ignorant of the ſort of worſhip which the Roman pontiffs ſuffered to be paid to the moſt ignoble part of their dreſs. Pius VI. had foreſeen that it would not be refuſed by the ſuperſtitious people of Vienna, and had not forgot his ſlipper. It was placed upon a cuſhion in the audience chamber, and was kiſſed by all the eccleſiaſtics, who preſented themſelves in crowds, by many devotees of every claſs, and even by many perſons attracted by curioſity alone, who wiſhed to enjoy the malicious pleaſure of playing their part in the moſt ridiculous ſcene, perhaps, that ſuperſtition ever invented to debaſe mankind. The holy ſlipper was even carried about as a relic to ſeveral of the moſt diſtinguiſhed houſes of Vienna; but the greater part of the laity were only permitted to kiſs his hand, and the fiſherman's ring with which it was adorned.

Theſe enjoyments, however, which ſo many public and private homages afforded to the vanity of Pius VI., were embittered by ſeveral mortifications in more eſſential matters. Few perſons were in the ſecret of the frequent conferences

ferences which he held with the emperor. It is from the conſequences alone, that we know he had little reaſon to be as well ſatisfied with them as he affected to ſay he was after his departure from Vienna. He even experienced, during his ſtay there, ſeveral diſappointments which belied his aſſertions. It was diſcovered that, in his converſations with the emperor, the great queſtions which had given occaſion to his journey were never thoroughly diſcuſſed. In the emperor's cloſet only one ſingle political conference took place, at which were preſent prince Kaunitz, cardinal Migazzi, archbiſhop of Vienna, and cardinal Herzan, the emperor's miniſter at Rome. The pope endeavoured to move Joſeph II. by a pathetic ſpeech, which he interſperſed with arguments drawn from the canon law. He had no reaſon to congratulate himſelf on the ſucceſs of his harangue. The emperor evaded all diſcuſſion. "I am no theologian," anſwered he; "I am too little acquainted with the canon law "to enter into a verbal argument. Your holineſs will have "the goodneſs to commit to paper the repreſentations you "may think proper to addreſs to me, in order that I may "ſubmit them to the examination of my theologians. Car-"dinal Herzan has already informed you of the reſolutions "I have taken relative to the churches and convents in my "dominions. My only object in every thing that has been "done, or that yet remains to be done, is the good of my "ſubjects. The new arrangements that I have determined "upon were indiſpenſably neceſſary; and I will maintain "them with the greater firmneſs, as not one of them affects, "in the ſlighteſt degree, the doctrine of the church. If "your holineſs wiſhes for a more ample explanation, you "may deliver your objections in writing; my chancellor "will anſwer them officially, and in the fulleſt manner, "and I will even have them printed for the information of "my ſubjects." This was giving him ſufficiently to underſtand what he had to expect. The formidable chancellor in queſtion was the prince de Kaunitz [no leſs a philoſopher, and, perhaps, ſtill more inflexible, than the emperor himſelf], whoſe frigid demeanor and ſilence it was not eaſy for Pius VI. to miſconſtrue. He endeavoured, by fawning and flattery, to ſmooth the rugged brow of the prime miniſter, and received in return nothing but cold politeneſs and unmeaning anſwers.

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He expected at leaſt to receive the firſt viſit from him. The miniſter of the emperor could never entertain the preſumptuous idea of its being paid him by the ſovereign pontiff of the univerſal church. Thus reaſoned Pius VI. Pius VI. reaſoned ill. The pride of prince Kaunitz could not even ſtoop before the Holy See. Pius VI., who was deſirous of viewing his magnificent apartments, particularly his gallery of pictures, was at length forced to make advances highly repugnant to his dignity. He ſent to inquire when he could have an opportunity of ſeeing him, and of admiring the curioſities his palace contained. Kaunitz fixed a day and an hour, and the pope was punctual to the appointment. On reaching the chancellor's houſe, he found his family dreſſed in ſuperb gala ſuits, and his ſervants clad in their richeſt liveries. The gate-way, the ſtair-caſe, and the veſtibule were full of men who came out to meet him, and were eager to pay him the honours due to his ſupreme rank. He prepared himſelf for the moſt diſtinguiſhed reception on the part of the maſter of the houſe. He was already in his apartments, when the prince de Kaunitz at length made his appearance, but in a morning dreſs, and with an air rather familiar than reſpectful. Pius VI. held out his hand to him. Inſtead of kiſſing it, as the pope naturally expected, in conformity with a cuſtom from which nobody had ever derogated, Kaunitz laid hold of it, ſhook it, and ſqueezed it in a very affectionate manner, which much aſtoniſhed the pontiff, and greatly ſcandaliſed every body preſent. With affected politeneſs, he afterwards inſiſted upon being his *Cicerone*. He pointed out to him the beauties of his pictures. He made him walk forwards, ſtep back, turn to the right, and to the left, in order that he might ſee each of them in its proper light. This was the firſt time that Pius VI. ever felt himſelf pulled and puſhed about in every direction by a profane hand; he who was never approached but with an air of the moſt reſpectful awe, nor ever touched unleſs to receive homage. It was not without difficulty that he preſerved his compoſure during the whole of this ſcene, which appeared ſtrange to every body, except to the principal actor; and, that he might not increaſe the mortification that he was made to undergo, by appearing to be ſenſible of it, he was obliged to teſtify his acknowledgments to prince de Kaunitz for this extreme complaiſance, of which he, indeed, received no other proof. The fine arts were the only ſubject on

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which the grave and auſtere chancellor could talk with the ſovereign pontiff. He evaded all converſation upon other topics; and if a judgment could be formed of the ſovereign by his miniſter, Pius VI. had no reaſon to hope that he ſhould derive any benefit from his journey. In fact he found Joſeph II. much more open and kind than the prince de Kaunitz; but fully as inflexible. He ſoon had an opportunity of judging of the degree to which the emperor was tenacious of his political maxims, even in the moſt minute circumſtances.

The Barnabites had juſt erected in their church a marble altar, which cardinal Migazzi conſecrated. The monks ſolicited of the pope a plenary indulgence for this altar. The favour, which was very inſignificant, and little intereſting to the emperor, was readily granted by the pope, by a brief which he wrote with his own hand. But the provincial of the Barnabites being deſirous of having the brief printed, could not obtain permiſſion to have it done till after it had undergone the formalities required by the new ordinances; that is, till after it had been ſigned by the emperor, like any other brief that might have been made out at Rome.

Notwithſtanding theſe unpleaſant appearances, Pius VI. was, or at leaſt pretended to be, ſatisfied with the emperor. It is true that, in other reſpects, he obtained from Joſeph every thing that was calculated to flatter his vanity. Their conferences were of the moſt friendly kind. The emperor ſpoke to him confidentially concerning the principal perſonages in Europe, and the intereſt of the other courts; and even made diſcoveries to him which might have appeared indiſcreet. At no one time did he ſhew the ſmalleſt ſymptom of ill humour; which was moſt aſſuredly, on the part of Joſeph, a ſtrong proof of the deſire he felt to pleaſe the pontiff.

The pope, on his ſide, neglected nothing to render himſelf agreeable to the emperor. He took every opportunity of praiſing his affability, his information, his ſtrong and cultivated mind, and even his devotion. In this latter particular he was even guilty of an imprudence, the intention of which might be good, but which was cenſured at Rome with great ſeverity. There were then at Vienna four cardinals; Migazzi, Herzan, Firmian, biſhop of Paſſau, and Batthyani, an Hungarian nobleman. This was one more

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than, ſtrictly ſpeaking, was abſolutely neceſſary to a conſiſtory. Pius VI. had ſufficiently ſhewn his fondneſs for parade. He afforded a freſh proof of it by holding a conſiſtory at Vienna, under the pretence of giving the hat to Firmian and Batthyani, the two cardinals. In this aſſembly, at which Joſeph II. and his brother Maximilian were preſent, he delivered a Latin diſcourſe, which he concluded with a pompous panegyric on the emperor: "We have "had," cried he with enthuſiaſm, "frequent opportunities "of ſeeing him; and we cannot help admiring, not only "the unlimited kindneſs with which he welcomed us to "his imperial reſidence, and the magnificent manner in "which he there daily receives us, but alſo his *uncommon* "*devotion*, his extraordinary talents, and his incredible ap-"plication to buſineſs. What a conſolation for our pater-"nal heart, to find that piety and religion reign, without "having received the ſlighteſt injury, not only in this ſplen-"did capital, but alſo among all the inhabitants of the im-"perial ſtates through which we paſſed. We ſhall never "ceaſe then to celebrate his virtues, and to ſupport them "with our fervent prayers. We implore Almighty God, "who never abandons thoſe who ſeek him, to ſtrengthen "his imperial majeſty in his holy reſolutions, and to ſhow-"er down upon him his celeſtial grace."

The people of Vienna, to whom the court took care to make known this paſſage of the ſpeech, through the medium of the preſs, were much edified by the affecting effuſion of the ſovereign pontiff. But muſt not the emperor have laughed within himſelf at praiſes ſo unexpected, and ſo little deſerved? Pius VI., in the ſimplicity of his heart, juſtified them in his own eyes, by recalling to mind a converſation he had had with him a few days before. Joſeph had aſked him, whether, in any one of his new ordinances, there was a ſingle article which affected the Chriſtian doctrine; and whether his holineſs muſt not confeſs that they related ſolely to the diſcipline of the church? Pius VI. had admitted it; upon which the emperor had replied, *I am not then a heretic, as is ſuppoſed at Rome.* The pope concluded from this, that the emperor had thought he perceived ſome charges of hereſy in his correſpondence with Garampi, his nuncio; and he took, or rather created, an opportunity of making amends for the wrong he had done the illuſtrious hoſt, by whom he was ſo well entertained. But the Ro-

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man cardinals, who had no apology to make, and who were ſenſible that the Imperial ordinances attacked eccleſiaſtical prerogatives much more intereſting to them than the doctrine of the church, did not admit the validity of the pope's juſtification, but aſſerted, that his pompous harangue, the offspring of his vanity, was a tacit approbation of the emperor's diſaſtrous meaſures.

While he was boaſting of the aſcendancy he had gained over him; and while cardinal Herzan was informing his friends at Rome, that the pope never ſpoke of the emperor but in terms of *admiration and gratitude*, what was the conduct of that prince? He did not even wait for the pontiff's departure to proceed with his reforms; but continued, without the conſent of the Holy See, to ſuppreſs the monaſtic orders in the Milaneſe, and the ſtate of Mantua. Could Pius VI. ſincerely believe in Joſeph's devotion, which, in his eyes, muſt have conſiſted chiefly in ſhewing a reſpectful deference to the pontifical authority?

But an explanation of theſe contradictions is to be found in the inconſiſtency of his character, and in the facility with which he ſuffered himſelf to be dazzled by external homage paid to his perſon. Joſeph, who ſoon divined his diſpoſition, was not ſparing of thoſe means of ſeduction. In the courſe of the month of April, the pope was informed by a courſer, that unforeſeen and important affairs required his ſpeedy return. He immediately began to make preparations for his departure; but it was eaſily ſeen that they were not unattended with regret; for he was well aware that his journey had as yet been productive of no real advantage. Accordingly, when a foreign miniſter was indiſcreet enough to aſk him on what day he intended to ſet off, Pius VI. made anſwer: *I am pope, it is true, but not prophet; my departure depends upon the iſſue of my negotiation.* It was, however, foreſeen, that it would not be deferred. The emperor ordered an elegant travelling carriage to be prepared for him: the period was now arrived in which he was about to diſplay his magnificence. He made him a preſent of a *pectoral* †, enriched with diamonds, valued at two hundred thouſand florins. Pius VI. ſaid, on accepting it: "I ſhall not conſider this preſent as my perſonal "property, but as an appendage of the Holy See, for my ſucceſſors

† The croſs worn upon the breaſt by the dignified clergy of the Roman catholic church. T.

" ſucceſſors to wear on days of great ſolemnity, as a mark " of Imperial benevolence." Joſeph went ſtill farther. He delivered to the pope, by the hands of the vice-chancellor of the empire, a diploma, conferring on his nephew, Lewis Braſchi Oneſti, the dignity of prince of the holy Roman empire, exempting him at the ſame time from the fees paid in like caſes, which are eſtimated at ninety thouſand florins. Pius VI. exhibited on this occaſion, a very unexpected proof of wiſdom, which would have been quite complete, had it not been extolled by himſelf. But modeſty was not his favourite virtue. He at firſt accepted the diploma, but afterwards returned it to the emperor, begging him to reſerve that favour for a more ſuitable time. *I ſhould be ſorry*, added he, *to have it ſaid, that I have been more attentive to the aggrandiſement of my family than to the intereſt of the church.* The emperor approved this inſtance of ſelf-denial, and the diploma remained, till further orders, in the hands of prince Colloredo. Magnificent preſents were made to the perſons who attended the pope. Pius VI., in his turn, could not avoid giving proofs of his liberality to thoſe who had been appointed by the emperor to attend him. This did not fail to increaſe the coſt of a journey already ſo expenſive. It was calculated that this uſeleſs whim added a million of Roman crowns to the debts of the Apoſtolical Chamber. The diſburſement of ſuch a ſum, eſpecially at a time when the bad adminiſtration of public affairs began to excite alarming murmurs, would ſcarcely have been juſtified by the moſt complete ſucceſs. We ſhall ſoon ſee whether that was the caſe.

Every circumſtance that attended upon the ſeparation of Pius VI., and of the emperor, was calculated to add to the gratitude of the pontiff. Joſeph endeavoured to keep up his deluſion to the very moment of his departure, and even beyond that period. Every thing that was moſt ſtriking and ſumptuous in the *étiquette* of his court was laviſhly diſplayed while he was paying the laſt honours to his gueſt, who was become his friend, or who at leaſt indulged that idea. He promiſed him repeatedly to repay his viſit. He was determined to make a proper return. The caſes, however, were by no means parallel. The taſte of Joſeph for traveliing was well known; and that taſte was neither ſuitable to the uſual age, nor to the ſituation of the Roman pontiff. But Pius VI., who was always ready to view every thing in the light

light moſt gratifying to his vanity, ſet off moſt highly ſatisfied with this promiſe; Joſeph and his brother accompanying him to the diſtance of a league from Vienna. They all three alighted at the church of Mariabrunn; entered it, and after having offered up their prayers with equal fervour, Joſeph and the archduke received the embrace and benediction of the holy father, and left him with an appearance of the moſt lively emotion. The crowd that ſurrounded them was affected; tears were mingled with acclamations; and the pope took the road that led to the convent of Mœlk, where he was to paſs the night.

The monks of Mariabrunn, at the particular requeſt of the pope and the emperor, immortaliſed the time and place of this affecting ſeparation. Some months after, the following inſcription, in Latin and German, was engraved upon marble, and placed at the entrance of the church:

" Pius VI., ſovereign pontiff, and Joſeph II., emperor " of the Romans, with the archduke Maximilian, after " having offered up their prayers in this church, parted in " the midſt of the moſt tender embraces, and of the tears " of all the ſpectators."

But what is ſtill more ſingular than this monument, is that the very day on which this *affecting* ſeparation took place, the emperor's commiſſaries came and declared to the monks, that henceforward his Imperial majeſty would ſave them the trouble of receiving their income, and that their convent was put in ſequeſtration. Upon the communication of this intelligence, they became a little leſs ſenſible of the honour they had juſt received; and began to ſuſpect that the ſovereign pontiff might poſſibly have made an ineffectual journey.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIII.

The POPE'S *Return to Rome.*

PIUS VI. did not, or at leaſt pretended not, to participate in the uneaſineſs which began to be conceived even in Auſtria, as to the reſult of his journey. In letters written from Vienna, a few days before his departure, and from ſeveral places on the road, he ſaid, indeed, that, though perfectly well ſatisfied with the reception given him by the emperor, *he had not been able to gain any eſſential point*; becauſe he, as the head of the church, had not choſen to make conceſſions repugnant to his feelings. In proportion, however, as he approached his reſidence, he felt that, to procure a good reception, it was neceſſary to prepare men's minds by holding a different kind of language. Beſides, he had received, while on the road, three letters from the emperor, which, doubtleſs, inſpired him with ſome vague hopes. He accordingly wrote to his nephew, from Bologna, to the following effect: "I have obtained from the emperor every "thing that I deſired. He has ſuppreſſed the new oath "which he had required from the biſhops in his dominions; "and, on my part, I have given them the power of granting diſpenſations for marriages as far as the third and "fourth degree of conſanguinity, and even for nearer degrees, only binding them to aſk my permiſſion in certain "caſes.—I have alſo obtained ſeveral modifications in regard to the monaſteries of both ſexes, and to religious "toleration.—*Upon the whole*," added he, "*my preſence has* "*been highly advantageous to religion; and I cannot help con-*"*gratulating myſelf upon my journey.*"

It is probable that he might be really ſincere in thus magnifying himſelf the very ſlight advantages that he had gained. His vanity had been completely gratified; and that was a great reaſon for his *congratulating himſelf upon his journey.* The truth was, that he had ſubmitted, without difficulty, to the ſuppreſſion of uſeleſs convents; becauſe at the bottom of his heart he was no friend to the monks, and that he had acquieſced in the emperor's maxims of toleration, becauſe he was not himſelf inclined to perſecution. But he

he returned deeply afflicted by the annihilation of certain bulls; monuments moſt dear to him, as the authority of the Holy See. He was grieved at the re-eſtabliſhment of the biſhops in their primitive rights, at the meaſure which ſubjected the monks of their dioceſe to their authority, and which rendered the latter independent of their generals reſident at Rome. Upon all theſe points he had in vain endeavoured to convert Joſeph and his miniſters. He had obtained ſome promiſes, which kept alive his deluſion. The emperor agreed with him that the ſuperfluous monaſteries ſhould be ſhut up; but that he would not totally ſuppreſs any monaſtic order; and that an *imprimatur* ſhould not be granted for any pamphlet written againſt the legitimate exerciſe of the papal authority. For Meſſrs. Eybel and Sonnenfels, two Auſtrian writers, examined with great ſeverity the pretenſions of the court of Rome; the former in a work entitled, *What is the pope?* the latter in a publication relative to the journey of Pius VI. Joſeph II. permitted him alſo to hope that, during his pontificate, things ſhould remain upon the old footing as to the biſhoprics and benefices of Lombardy. Pius VI., on his departure, had therefore ſome reaſon to believe that his apoſtolical journey had not been altogether ineffectual. But of theſe two negotiators, each of whom flattered himſelf, perhaps, that he had overreached the other, one thought that he has as yet only taſted the firſt-fruits of his ſucceſs, the other that he had as yet only put the firſt hand to his reforms. Soon after one of them diſcovered that he had been deceived, or at leaſt that he had deceived himſelf; and the other, that he had remained unſhaken in his reſolutions. But let us follow Pius VI. on his return to Rome.

The day of his departure he ſlept at Mœlk, in the ſame convent which, ſixteen years afterwards, was intended for his aſylum, when, in the firſt moments of the revolution at Rome, the emperor, the nephew of him who had entertained him in more proſperous times, agreed with the French government to receive him in his dominions. The count de Cobenzel accompanied him as far as Braunau, the firſt town of Bavaria, on the road from Auſtria to Rome. The elector was determined that the pope ſhould not perceive that he was travelling in the territory of a different prince. He diſplayed all the pomp of his army, of his guards, and in ſhort all the magnificence of his court. He went to meet

him, ſeated him in a ſuperb carriage which he took with him on purpoſe, and conducted him to his capital in the midſt of the pious acclamations of a nation which vies in devotion, even with the people of Vienna. He paſſed ſix days in the city of Munich, which is called the *Rome of Germany*; and could eaſily perceive that the title was not ill beſtowed. The Bavarian government was far from poſſeſſing that philoſophical courage which rendered the court of Vienna ſo formidable to the Holy See. Pius VI. received from it nothing but homages; the enjoyment of which was diſturbed by no unpleaſant circumſtance. The court of Munich had even carried its attentions ſo far, as to redouble its orthodoxical ſeverity, in order to prevent the occurrence of any thing which might give the pontiff the ſmalleſt alarm. Two days before his arrival, all the bookſellers and printers received orders not to ſell or publiſh any work which had not paſſed through the hands of the electoral cenſors. His piety and vanity were equally gratified during his ſtay in Bavaria. It was the only country in Europe where the authority of the Holy See had remained unimpaired. The court, although renowned for gallantry, had preſerved a great attachment for every thing that conſtitutes the external part of religion. The nation was one of the moſt ignorant, and conſequently one of the moſt ſuperſtitious, of the catholic world. Whole legions of fanatical monks formed one of the moſt valuable diviſions of the papal troops. No ſpark of philoſophy had diminiſhed either their pious belief or their blind ſubordination. The Holy See reckoned in Bavaria alone more than five thouſand truſty ſatellites. The pope was more revered there than in Rome itſelf, and the homages which he received were equally unanimous and profound. Accordingly when he approached Augſbourg, and was about to paſs the weſtern limits of Bavaria, he turned round with emotion towards that country ſo favoured by heaven, and laviſhed upon it his benedictions and his good wiſhes, of which it had ſhewn itſelf ſo deſerving.

The elector of Treves, who had waited upon him at Munich, attended him as far as Augſbourg, of which he was biſhop, and where he had a palace. On entering the territory of that Imperial city, where the ſectariſts of both religions, the catholic and proteſtant, are equally tolerated, and have each a ſhare in the government, Pius VI. was, for the

the firſt time, in a land infected with hereſy; a circumſtance which meaſures had been taken to prevent his perceiving. The catholic magiſtrates aſked their proteſtant colleagues how they propoſed to receive the pope. They anſwered, that it was contrary to their religious principles to receive him in that quality; but that they reſpected him as a crowned head, and would readily concur in any homage which might be paid him upon that ground. They kept their word. Pius VI. was complimented by a deputation of the ſenate, conſiſting of two catholics and two proteſtants, and received the preſents which the Imperial cities are accuſtomed to make to diſtinguiſhed perſonages. Every thing that was intereſting in Augſbourg was ſhewn to him, particularly all that appertained to the arts and ſciences.

Pius VI. was poſſeſſed of erudition, at leaſt in what related to theological affairs. He diſplayed it with affectation, and it was celebrated, as it generally happens in ſimilar caſes, by the moſt exaggerated flattery. At the library of the city, where his literary knowledge was moſt conſpicuouſly diſplayed, an incident occurred, trifling enough in itſelf, but which produced a great effect upon the public mind in Germany. The librarian, M. Mertens, who was a proteſtant, was commiſſioned to make a ſpeech to him; but conſidering himſelf as the organ of the whole city, in which the catholic religion was co-equal with his own, he hazarded expreſſions ſo reſpectful, and ſo little conformable to the language of a heretic, that all thoſe of his ſect took great offence; and the pontiff himſelf appeared almoſt as much embarraſſed as flattered. It was ſtill worſe when the learned proteſtant was ſeen to bend his knee before the head of the catholic church; all the fanatics, for there are alſo fanatics among the Lutherans, ſet up an outcry againſt ſuch idolatry. In vain did Mertens endeavour to excuſe himſelf, by ſaying that genuflexion was one of the ceremonies of the Spaniſh court. He was not forgiven for affording the papiſts ſo ſignal a triumph.

Pius VI. paſſed three days at Augſbourg, in the midſt of ceremonies, religious and profane; and no where did he leave behind him a more favourable idea of his eloquence, affability, and knowledge. The journals of the day ſpeak of them in terms of enthuſiaſm.

Augſbourg was intereſting to him in more than one point of view. It was there that he received, for the firſt time,

the homage of thoſe refractory children, whom he had been accuſtomed to hold in horror and deteſtation; it was at Augſbourg that the Roman church had received that painful wound which is ſtill bleeding; and it was there, in ſhort, that he found himſelf in the preſence of that elector of Treves, to whom he was indebted for one of the greateſt conſolations that Rome, afflicted by ſo many misfortunes, had for a long time received. For it was to the ſolicitation of this devout prince, that M. Hontheim, his ſuffragan, had yielded, when he recanted, as we have before obſerved, his work publiſhed under the name of Febronius, and which was ſo formidable to the court of Rome. He accordingly took great pleaſure in the ſociety of a client, whoſe zeal did not appear to him leſs edifying than his birth was illuſtrious. He was not, like Joſeph II., one of thoſe children diſobedient to his paternal exhortations; nor was the tribute of reſpect that he received from him mere ſhow and grimace. Notwithſtanding his apparent ſerenity, he ſtood in need of conſolation; and found it in the effuſions of the pious elector.

The ſecret chagrin and diſquietude which accompanied him from Vienna, manifeſted themſelves at Augſbourg upon a remarkable occaſion. Among the perſonages, more or leſs diſtinguiſhed by their rank, who crowded round him, were four prelates of the empire, imperceptible ſovereigns, whoſe territory is ſcarcely viſible upon the map. One of them, biſhop of Ochſenhauſen, in Swabia, converſing with him in Latin, the pope aſked him how many convents he had belonging to his ſee. *I have eleven under me*, anſwered the prelate, *with a ſorrowful air*; *but ſix of them are ſituated in the Auſtrian dominions.* This was recalling painful ideas to the mind of Pius VI.; for, among other meaſures that the emperor had taken, he had decreed that no prieſt in the Auſtrian ſtates ſhould in future acknowledge a foreign ſovereignty. Here Pius VI., lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, ſuffered his painful ſecret to eſcape him. *Oh! my dear children, I have left nothing unattempted to keep things as they formerly were, or to reſtore them to their priſtine ſtate*; BUT ——*the buſineſs, however, is not finally ſettled: let us pray and hope.* He did not expreſs himſelf in this manner in the letters which he wrote to Rome.

Three days after, he ſet off for the Tyrol, the elector accompanying him as far as the frontiers of his little ſtate. There

There a ſeparation took place ſtill more affecting than the preceding ones. On the 7th of May he arrived at Inſpruck, where he was received by the archduchefs Eliſabeth, the emperor's third ſiſter. She was abbeſs in that town which was the capital of the Tyrol. Her brother had recommended her to receive the ſovereign pontiff with all the ſolemnity compatible with her ſituation; but the archduchefs was led by her pious ſentiments to improve upon the emperor's inſtructions. He was received at Brixen by the biſhop, who endeavoured, by every mark of reſpect, to make the holy father forget the chagrin he had given him the preceding year, by ſtrictly forbidding the clergy of his dioceſe the uſe of the bull *Unigenitus*. He arrived at Trent on the 10th of May, and was received there by the biſhop of that city, ſo famous in the annals of the Roman church; but he made no ſtay. After having paſſed through Roveredo, he a ſecond time entered the Venetian territories. Verona received him with a diſplay of all the magnificence of which its ſituation admits. The wide bed of the Adige, which waſhes the walls of that city, reflected the ſplendor of a ſuperb illumination. Conducted in pomp to the amphitheatre of Verona, and looking down from the top of that noble monument of the ancient Romans upon the vaſt encloſure which formerly was devoted to their pleaſures, the ſovereign, the great pontiff of modern Rome, laviſhed his benedictions upon ſixty thouſand of the faithful proſtrate at his feet. The biſhop of Verona was treated by the holy father leſs affectionately than his flock. He had recently addreſſed a paſtoral letter to his dioceſans in the Tyrol, which was too conſonant with the principles of the cabinet of Vienna not to give great diſpleaſure to the biſhop of Rome. He had dared to ſuppreſs the confraternities of the Heart of Jeſus, and of the Lord of St. Francis. He had dared to forbid the admiſſion of the pope's indulgences till they had been examined by himſelf, and had obtained the approbation of the emperor. It would have required a great effort of Chriſtian charity in Pius VI. to forgive ſuch ſerious injuries.

No ſimilar circumſtance embittered the pleaſure he derived from the brilliant reception that awaited him at Vicenza and Padua. He was approaching the capital of that republic againſt which he had more than one cauſe of complaint; and, notwithſtanding the repugnance of the Sacred College, could not reſiſt the temptation of ſeeing Venice. The ſe-

nate,

nate, which was acquainted with his intention, ſent Manin and Contarini, two procurators of St. Mark, to meet him as far as the frontiers of the Tyrol, and to preſide over the entertainments that were prepared for him all along the road. His entry into Venice afforded a ſpectacle, the only one of its kind, perhaps, in the world, and ſuch as the Venetians themſelves had never ſeen. The patriarch, and eighteen biſhops of the Venetian ſtate, had gone as far as Fuſina to receive him, each in his own gondola, and each ſurrounded by the dignitaries of his dioceſe. Upon the banks of the Brenta, he found a galley magnificently adorned, which the doge and the *ſignoria* had ſent him. He was thus conducted, ſurrounded with a crowd of boats and gondolas, as far as the iſland of San Georgio-in-Alga, ſituated at the diſtance of half a league from the city. There the doge, the ſenate, and the principal magiſtrates of the republic, were waiting for him in their magnificent gala dreſſes. Upon perceiving them, the pope landed from his galley; and the doge received him in his arms, and was about to fall at his feet. Pius VI. graciouſly prevented him; and from that moment the moſt friendly intimacy took place between them, and began to awaken the ſuſpicions of the jealous ſenators appointed to watch over the conduct of the doge. They embarked in the ſame gondola with the patriarch, and two nuncios; Garampi of Vienna, who had accompanied his holineſs ever ſince his departure, and Ranucci of Venice. Their retinue ſeated themſelves in the two other two gondolas belonging to the doge. They rowed along, attended by five or ſix thouſand boats and other veſſels, variouſly ornamented. Upon approaching the great canal of the mint, which is the true entrance of Venice, the pope was ſaluted with two hundred guns, from ſeven gallies ſtationed in that port. For ſeveral hours all the bells in the city announced his arrival. The banks of the canals, all the windows, and all the roofs of the houſes were crowded with ſpectators. Never had ſuch univerſal enthuſiaſm, nor ſuch a concourſe of people, been ſeen at Venice; nor could any city in Europe exhibit a multitude of ſpectators conſiſting of ſuch motley groups. After empty, but brilliant ceremonies, the pope was taken to ſee every thing remarkable that Venice contained. The Venetians had reſerved for him the ſpectacle moſt likely to gratify his curioſity; the ceremony of the marriage of the doge to the Adriatic ſea. It was regularly celebrated

lebrated on the Aſcenſion-day; but this year it was deferred till Whit-monday, on account of the pope. Every thing was prepared to make the ſight as pleaſing to him as poſſible. The preceding evening he had officiated with great pomp ſn one of the principal churches of the city. The day of his departure was drawing near. Entreaties were vain; his reſolution was not to be ſhaken. What could be his motive? On this it is not eaſy to form any conjecture; for Pius VI. could ſometimes be ſecret and reſerved. It had, however, been remarked, that the doge had been extremely prodigal of his attentions to the pope; that he had had ſeveral conferences with him, which were thought too familiar; and that ſometimes, even in public, he had affected to ſpeak to him in a whiſper. What ſecrets could he have to communicate? Could the nominal head of the republic, who is ſubject to more rigorous laws than the meaneſt citizen, have any thing to conceal from the knowledge of the ſenate? The republic had firmly reſiſted the uſurped authority of the Holy See. By vindicating its unalienable rights, it had afflicted the ſovereign pontiff. Did the doge wiſh to ſoothe the pope's reſentment of this ſevere conduct; to give him conſolation, or even hopes? Did he wiſh to make his peace at the expenſe of his ſovereign? The gloomy ſtate-inquiſitors doubtleſs conceived ſuſpicions, and did not hide them from the doge. They reminded him, in harſh terms, of his dependence, his duty, and his danger. The pope perceived it, and repented having done the jealous ſenate an honour of which the Sacred College thought it unworthy. He was afraid of being a ſource of trouble to his affectionate hoſt, whoſe affability might be conſtrued into a crime againſt the ſtate; and ſet off from Venice on Whit-ſunday, without waiting for the ceremony, ſtill more abſurd than pompous, which was to be celebrated on the following day.

He paſſed a ſecond time through Padua, where new honours awaited him. On his arrival at Canaro, which was the boundary between the Venetian and the eccleſiaſtical ſtates, he took leave of the two procurators of St. Mark, who had accompanied him thus far. He was received upon the banks of the Po by cardinals Des Lances and Caraffa, who were come to congratulate him on his return to Italy. After having paſſed over the bridge recently built acroſs the Po, he made his ſolemn entry into Ferrara, the firſt city of his

his dominions, and immediately reſumed the exerciſe of his ſovereignty. On the very day after his arrival he held a conſiſtory, in which he proclaimed the dignity conferred on cardinal Herzan, whoſe nomination he had, according to a whimſical cuſtom, reſerved *in petto* for three years. He raiſed to the ſame dignity the archbiſhop of Ferrara and the good cardinal Mattei, who will again be brought forward when we have occaſion to ſpeak of the Roman revolution. This prelate joined to the piety of his profeſſion a peaceable diſpoſition; but his mind was inclined to ſuperſtition, and a blind devotion to the maxims of the Holy See. His exaltation aſtoniſhed a part of the inhabitants of Rome, and was a triumph for the Jeſuitical party, who thence concluded that Pius VI. had not been perverted by his travels.

At Bologna, he received an affectionate viſit from one of his moſt faithful and moſt illuſtrious children, the duke of Parma, who had inherited none of the philoſophical boldneſs with which his father had dared to reſiſt the pretenſions of the court of Rome. At Imola, he was received by his uncle, cardinal Bandi; on the gate of Faenza he found flattering inſcriptions, by which his vanity was much gratified. At Ceſena, he had an enjoyment of another kind. He there found his family aſſembled, happy to ſee and to welcome him again to his native place. Continuing his route afterwards through Peſaro, Fano, and Sinigaglia, he arrived at Ancona, where he was received with great parade. A ſtatue had been erected in that city, repreſenting him giving his benediction to the people; but it was ſomething elſe that the inhabitants of Ancona expected from his magnificence. He paid a viſit to their port, where he was received with a ſalute of artillery and martial muſic; went on board a ſhip which had been prepared for him, and for a moment fancied that he was poſſeſſed of a navy. He made a very ſhort ſtay at our Lady of Loretto, Recanati, and Macerata; performing, however, divine worſhip, and diſtributing benedictions wherever he ſtopped.

As he approached Rome, his route was marked by accumulated homages of reſpect and ſtupid admiration. In ſeveral places he paſſed under triumphal arches; in others he found pompous inſcriptions. At Foligno, ſome nuns of a poor convent ſolicited relief: *It would be of no uſe to you*, anſwered the pope, *your convent will be immediately ſuppreſſed.* It was ſo, in reality, a ſhort time after; but the ſuppreſſion

of

of monaſteries, from whatever quarter it came, was ſure to be a ſource of chagrin to the holy father. The expulſion of theſe poor nuns from their convent occaſioned an inſurrection among the people; and to ſuppreſs it, the two authorities were obliged to concert meaſures. The magiſtrate came to the aſſiſtance of the biſhop, and ordered the rioters to be apprehended. There are times and places in which inclination alone is inſufficient to operate the moſt uſeful and even the moſt trifling reforms.

From Foligno, Pius VI. proceeded through Spoletto and Narni to Otricoli. In the latter place he had an opportunity of making a parade of his taſte for the arts and ſciences, which the many curioſities of every kind that he had ſeen, during the laſt two months, had only ſerved to revive. Carara, the ſecretary of the congregation of the council, who in a profeſſion, in general devoted to inutility, had cultivated the fine arts with ſucceſs, was waiting for him at Otricoli. It was he who was charged to continue in the environs of that place the excavations which had already furniſhed the *Muſæum Pio Clementinum* with the moſt exquiſite monuments of art, antique ſtatues, buſts, columns, tripods, and moſaics. Pius VI. applauded theſe diſcoveries as his own work, and, after having given orders to proceed with the excavations, took the road to Civita Caſtellana; the laſt place at which he ſlept before his arrival at Rome. He there found two perſons whom he had made happy during his journey, monſignor Campanelli, recently elevated to the office of pope's auditor, and monſignore Erſkine, whom he had appointed promoter of the faith. Theſe premature favours had ſatisfied none but thoſe who had received them. Campanelli and Erſkine were two upſtarts, who had as yet deſerved but little of the Holy See. The favour they enjoyed was an additional grievance, with which the pope's impolicy furniſhed the mal-contents of Rome, whom he ſhould rather have thought of appeaſing. But for ſome time paſt he ſeemed condemned to act unſeaſonably upon every occaſion.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIV.

The Pope's Arrival and Reception at Rome.

UPON approaching his capital, Pius VI. received teſtimonies ſo expreſſive of the ſatisfaction felt at his return, that a man more modeſt than himſelf might have believed them ſincere. Whether, however, he was tired of homages, or conſcious that he did not deſerve thoſe that were reſerved for him, he requeſted and obtained that a part of them ſhould be ſuppreſſed. It was intended to erect a triumphal arch upon the *Piazza del popolo*, which he was to croſs, to illuminate all the quarters of the town through which he was to paſs, and to celebrate his entry by fireworks, concerts, a great entertainment, and even a ball. It was alſo the intention of the Sacred College to go and meet him at the *Porta del popolo*. Pius VI. declined all theſe honours: he only permitted Albani, the dean of the cardinals, cardinal Antonelli, his favourite, and his beloved nephew, the duke de Nemi, to come and receive him at Ponto Molle. He could not, however, eſcape from all thoſe noiſy teſtimonies of public joy, which are rather matters of form than of real reſpect; from ſalutes of artillery, the ringing of the numerous bells of Rome, and the illumination of the principal hotels. But thoſe effuſions of the heart, thoſe ſpontaneous acclamations which a contented people pour forth, but which cannot be extorted from them, all thoſe teſtimonies of affection and gratitude which a ſovereign muſt and ought to feel, were not very prodigally beſtowed; and this he muſt have perceived. It was not that the Roman people doubted of his ſucceſs with the emperor; and even if they had, Pius VI. having other claims upon their affection, would have been pitied, and have been only the more beloved; but matters which more nearly concerned them were the meaſure of their ſentiments in regard to the pontiff. The whole eccleſiaſtical ſtate, particularly the capital, complained aloud of the high price of proviſions; and it was not by their ſilence only that his ſubjects had expreſſed their diſcontent.

content. All along the road from Bologna he had heard the moſt bitter complaints; received the moſt energetic petitions; and the momentary enthuſiaſm, occaſioned by his return, did not efface the unpleaſant impreſſions they had made. While he was paſſing in ſtate through the ſtreets of his capital, ſome of thoſe expreſſions were heard which courtiers call *ſeditious*. The cardinals and the prelates who were about him concealed, or diſguiſed the truth. Cardinal Pallavicini, his ſecretary of ſtate, an honeſt, though a weak man, felt much concern, but ſaid nothing. The cardinal de Bernis himſelf, perhaps the moſt ſincere of his friends, did not dare to break a ſilence, ſo ſcrupulouſly obſerved by thoſe about the pope's perſon; but from that time he was accuſtomed to ſay, *I ſee plainly that the reign of Pius VI. will in the end coſt him many a tear.* The common people, who had leſs diſcretion, revealed to him what was ſo carefully kept ſecret. A few days after his return he was hiſſed in the ſtreets of Rome; and dared no longer to go out on foot. But at that time one thing only occupied his mind. He was perſuaded that he had immortaliſed himſelf by his apoſtolical journey; and, by way of obtaining credit for his ſucceſs, was loud in his praiſe of Joſeph II. In his firſt interview with his moſt intimate friends, he ingenuouſly ſaid: "The emperor has a great "deal of religion. He aſſured me, and proved, that he "was the beſt catholic upon the face of the earth. It was "by his counſellors that he was led aſtray, after the death "of his reſpectable mother." The wiſe, but ſevere miniſter of Spain, agreed that his journey did him honour; "but I doubt," added he, "whether it will be uſeful to re-"ligion and the Holy See."—"Give me time," replied the holy father, "and you ſhall ſee that I will obtain more from "the emperor than you may perhaps imagine."

The truth, and it was ſoon evident, even to the moſt undiſcerning, was, that he had ſuffered himſelf to be impoſed upon by the wheedling manners of Joſeph II., and to be deceived by his vague and unmeaning promiſes. Joſeph, when he choſe to take the trouble, was ſure to pleaſe; and he neglected nothing to make himſelf agreeable to the pope. Penetrating and artful, he was ſoon acquainted with his adverſary, who was a perfect ſtranger to the language of courts, and had neither deſire nor power to diſſemble. He eaſily divined his inclinations, and took care to flatter the propenſity

ſity which he diſcovered for the defunct ſociety of Jeſus. This, indeed, was one of the great means employed to gain his point. Accordingly Pius VI., on his return, proud of the emperor's concurrence in his ſentiments, was leſs careful to conceal that affection, which the courts of Verſailles and Madrid had long ſuſpected, in ſpite of his proteſtations to the contrary. He took a pleaſure in repeating to the miniſters of thoſe courts, that the emperor had ſaid to him: "If the ſuppreſſion of the Jeſuits had depended upon me, "it ſhould not have taken place. Charles III. was in the "wrong to inſiſt upon it with ſo much warmth; but the "empreſs of Ruſſia is fully reſolved *to preſerve at leaſt the* "*ſeed.*"—Pius VI., by theſe communications, prepared himſelf an excuſe for the condeſcenſion which he did not delay ſhewing, upon this occaſion, to the formidable Catherine. But he betrayed his own ſecret; and the miniſters of France and Spain expreſſed to him their uneaſineſs. No matter, ſaid they, if the empreſs of Ruſſia keep the Jeſuits in her empire, provided you do not acknowledge them as ſuch. Upon which the pope haſtened to juſtify the ſuſpicion, and again proteſted that he would fulfil the promiſe he had made.

The queſtion, however, was to give a formal account of this journey, which had made ſo much noiſe, and been ſo very expenſive, to dazzle at leaſt the credulous, and to obtain the applauſe that had been ſo ſparingly dealt out to him on his arrival. He had taken time to prepare a pompous narrative, which was not ready till three months after his return. Notwithſtanding the high opinion he entertained of his own eloquence, and the ſmall ſhare of confidence he repoſed in cardinal Pallavicini, he choſe to ſubmit this narrative to his judgment. The cardinal found it prolix and minute, and took the liberty of making a great many eraſements, which did not make it appear leſs tedious and unſeaſonable. The pope delivered it with great emphaſis, in a ſolemn conſiſtory held on the 23d of September. After a multiplicity of particulars, which ſerved only to prove his puerile vanity, he thus concluded: "The *great genius* of the emperor Joſeph, "his very particular affection, of which we have received "ſo many proofs, his affability, his philanthropy, had ap-"peared to us a favourable augury; and we muſt confeſs, "added he, *that our confidence has not been deceived.* Indeed "we have already obtained from his equity ſome important "conceſſions,

" conceſſions, and he likewiſe gives us hopes of obtaining " ſeveral others.

The Sacred College did not expect to hear from the mouth of the pope only a long account of compliments and ceremonies. What had the catholic church, meaning themſelves, benefited by this journey, the object of which was to convert the emperor? This was a ſubject in regard to which the pontiff left them in total ignorance. It is true that he promiſed, by a brief, to make the whole catholic world acquainted with the advantages he had gained. But this promiſe would have been difficult to fulfil. The events which took place ſhortly after his return to Rome would but too fully have contradicted the aſſertions that he might, perhaps, have ventured to inſert in his brief.

His journey, which had met with ſo little approbation, even at Rome, before it was begun, became, when it was finiſhed, a ſubject of bitter reproaches, and even of invective. A ſhort time after holding his conſiſtory, the expectation of which had, perhaps, ſuſpended the reſentment of the diſcontented, he found upon his praying-deſk a virulent writing, which, among other abuſe, contained the following phraſe: *What Gregory VII., the greateſt of prieſts, had eſtabliſhed, Pius VI., the loweſt of prieſts, has deſtroyed.* In the mouth of a philoſopher this would have been an eulogium. It was a calumny in the mouth of a fanatic. The pope was very much affected at this injuſtice. He ſubmitted to it with a reſignation that does him honour. He wrote with his pencil the following anſwer at the bottom of the abuſive paper: *The kingdom of Chriſt is not of this world: he who diſtributes heavenly crowns, taketh not away periſhable crowns. Render to Cæſar the thiugs that are Cæſar's, and to God the thing's that are God's.* Pius VI. would have ſaved himſelf a great deal of vexation, had he regulated his conduct by theſe maxims; but even to profeſs them was much for a pope. This anſwer, indeed, diſplayed as much dejection as it did moderation. It ſufficiently indicated that Pius VI. was beginning to open his eyes. From that period every thing concurred to involve him in affliction. The formidable claims of Joſeph II., the opinions of the enlightened men at that time in Europe, found partiſans even at Rome: It was diſcovered that two bookſellers there privately ſold ſeveral pamphlets againſt the authority of the Holy See, and againſt celibacy, the works of that pretended Febronius, the real author of which had made

made a ſolemn abjuration of them; and the diſſertations of a learned German, named Eybel, as attractive by their contents as by their titles: *What is the pope? What is a cardinal? What is a biſhop?* The two delinquents were brought before the Holy Office, did penance in the audience chamber, received a blow with a ſtick at each of the verſes of the 51ſt pſalm, recited in their preſence, and paid a fine of five hundred crowns to the treaſury of the *propaganda*, which profeſſed maxims ſomewhat different from thoſe they wiſhed to diſſeminate. This noiſe ſerved only to bring into greater vogue the pamphlets which gave ſo much alarm, excited a degree of intereſt in favour of the bookſellers, and much indignation againſt their perſecutors.

CHAPTER XV.

Sequel of the Pope's Diſputes with the Emperor.

BUT Pius VI. had vexations far more poignant to experience from that prince, whom he conſidered *his friend.* In the firſt place, before the end of this year, a month of which he had paſſed in intimacy with him, he learned that Joſeph II. was about to deprive all the churches of his dominions of their landed eſtates. Pius VI., armed with all the weapons of the Goſpel, wrote to him a letter, in which he quoted the ſacred ſcriptures, invoked the ſacred apoſtles, cited the ſacred canons, reminded him of his promiſes, which, alas! he had alſo conſidered *ſacred.*—"What, would "your majeſty then prove that you had no regard for my "advice, or at leaſt that it has been ſoon forgotten! "Where then are thoſe proteſtations of attachment to the "purity of religion, thoſe orthodox principles which your "majeſty profeſſes, &c. &c." This long and pathetic letter was dated the 3d of Auguſt. Ten days after, Joſeph returned a dry and laconic anſwer.—"The reports which "alarm you are falſe; and, without ſearching into the "texts of the holy ſcriptures, which are ſubject to various "interpretations and explanations, I feel within me a moni-"tor that inſtructs me, as a legiſlator and as a protector of "religion,

" religion, what it is fit I ſhould do, or what I ſhould omit;
" and with the juſt and upright diſpoſition which I know I
" poſſeſs, this monitor can never lead me into error."

Such an anſwer was certainly not a favourable omen. But Pius VI., faithful to the advice which Jeſus Chriſt gave to his diſciples, to make themſelves like unto children, was, like them, eaſily alarmed, eaſily re-aſſured, paſſing rapidly from chagrin to ſerenity of mind, from dejection to hope. He could not be perſuaded that the *incomparable* Joſeph II. meant to deceive him. " Oh, no!" ſaid he; " but his " miniſters have altered the ſubſtance of what we had " together agreed upon."—And it was in the midſt of theſe ſubjects of alarm that he held this conſiſtory, and delivered that diſcourſe of which we have already ſpoken. His exterior, in public, correſponded with that ſecurity which he was deſirous ſhould obtain credit; but his temper, which he could repreſs when he was exhibiting himſelf, broke out in private. To the people of his houſehold he was impatient, paſſionate even to brutality, and rude in his converſation; he who affected all the forms of urbanity, who uſed the pureſt and moſt elegant language in his prepared ſpeeches, the ſtyle of which breathed mildneſs, charity, and all the Chriſtian virtues. Even cardinal Pallavicini did not eſcape his rough behaviour. Convinced of the inutility of his advice, he in the end was ſilent, as were the reſt of the Sacred College. Bernis himſelf kept upon the reſerve. He continued to receive from the pope proofs of affection and confidence; but he knew him to be imprudent, he ſaw him under the influence of perfidious adviſers, miſled either by fanaticiſm or ambition. Since his return from Vienna, his principal confidants were the Ex-jeſuit Zaccaria, and the cardinal Gerdyl; who from that period, looking forward to the papacy, leaned towards the Jeſuits.

Pius VI. affected a particular friendſhip for cardinal des Lances, formerly one the moſt violent antagoniſts of the defunct ſociety, and now become one of its warmeſt partiſans. It was in the intercourſe of theſe ſuſpicious friends that he imbibed his hopes and his rules of conduct. Little ſuſceptible of durable impreſſions, after having grieved for a while, he conſoled himſelf: his health had not ſuffered from this combination of circumſtances, which would have fretted any other perſon to death. It was his wiſh to reign and to live a long time; and thoſe who watched him cloſely,

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clearly ſaw that, as long as the *dogma* was not openly attacked, he would patiently endure every thing elſe.

He therefore alſo bore with that conſtant apathy, which has attended him even in theſe latter times, the ſuppreſſion of all the mendicant orders in the hereditary ſtates; the ſubjection of all the religious orders to the authority of the biſhops; and, what muſt have appeared ſtill more painful, a new edict of the emperor, which took from the *datario* the nomination to all the biſhoprics of the Milaneſe and of Mantua. Joſeph, entirely taking off the maſk, called himſelf in this edict *ſupreme guardian of the church, and adminiſtrator of all its temporal effects*. What theſe expreſſions meant and foreboded was not miſunderſtood at Rome. Pius VI. alone appeared not to perceive their tendency.

At the ſame time, the emperor ſuppreſſed all the uſeleſs convents, applied their revenues to the expenſes of the ſtate; took upon himſelf the nomination to all benefices which ſhould fall vacant during the months reſerved for the pope; reſtricted the prerogatives and the juriſdiction of the nuncio, &c. &c. And theſe examples (which would have been ſo ſcandalous at any other period, and, a century before, have occaſioned ſchiſms, inſurrections, and perhaps a civil war) were imitated by ſeveral princes of the empire, by ſome electors, and even by the elector of Treves, whom the pope had found ſo ſubmiſſive at the time of his paſſing through Augſbourg. Every thing announced that the reign of the pontiff of Rome was drawing near its end.

The principal, nay the ſole object, for ſome time, of the ſolicitude of the pope, the *dogma*, an obſcure word, ſubject to ſo many interpretations, was not as yet directly attacked. One only of the ordinances of the emperor could lead the timid or fanatic catholics to think it in danger. This was his edict concerning toleration, which was dated in 1781, and which Joſeph himſelf, enlightened by experience, had in ſome reſpects modified. This ſubject had been agitated more than once in his conferences with Pius VI., who was fearful of ſeeing audacious hereſy, by the means of this protecting edict, gradually invade the domain of the catholic church. Joſeph had endeavoured to reaſſure him, but had met with little ſucceſs. He had given him, towards the end of the year 1782, ſo

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many cauſes of chagrin, that he thought it his duty to addreſs him a few lines of conſolation at the beginning of the following year. He therefore wrote to him in a friendly ſtyle, which very well anſwered its purpoſe, that this edict concerning toleration, which had ſo much alarmed him, had occaſioned ſcarcely any apoſtacy; that he had taken meaſures to prevent there being as little as poſſible; that he was in hopes of thus coming to an amicable arrangement with him upon ſeveral other points. Theſe few words, for ſome time, reſtored the credulous pontiff to tranquillity; but it was of little duration.

Pius VI., encouraged by this ſort of invitation, entered into a regular correſpondence with Joſeph: he wrote him confidential letters, relying much upon this means of ſtopping him in his career of reform, which the emperor ran with more ardour than ever. The pontiff thought that the miſchief was increaſing; it was therefore neceſſary to recur to ſome effectual remedy. *I ſhall explain myſelf*, ſaid he, to the miniſters of France and Spain, who now found him a little more willing to take advice. They repreſented to him, that, by writing familiarly to the emperor, he would commit himſelf, without obtaining any thing; to this he anſwered with ingenuous warmth: "But it is neceſſary "that we let him know what we think, in ſuch manner as "we can, that we may have nothing to reproach ourſelves "with, either before God or man; that if the emperor "ſhould think proper to laugh at us, *it would be the worſe "for him, as it has been to ſo many others:* we muſt not, "however, for that reaſon, neglect our duty. Of this "we are aſſured, that theſe reproaches can never irritate "him, as he hears every thing quietly, whatever it may be, "*and does afterwards as he pleaſes.*" The perſons with whom he was holding this converſation did not know whether to complain or to laugh at his ſimplicity. They ſaw that he was in a critical ſituation, Joſeph II., firm in his plan, had nominated the prelate Viſconti to the archbiſhopric of Milan, without the concurrence of the Holy See. Nothing was more ſimple, or more reconcileable with true catholiciſm; but nothing, at the ſame time, was more derogatory to the before-received uſages, or more contrary to the pretenſions of the court of Rome, which conſtrued theſe uſages into rights. It was not without the greateſt repugnance that Pius VI. confirmed this nomination; but he was

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anxious to prevent a ſchiſm, of which the emperor had not the ſmalleſt apprehenſion. The pope's friends adviſed him to relieve himſelf by an expedient that might conciliate every thing. Anſwer the emperor, ſaid they, that upon his recommendation, M. Viſconti will be preconiſed archbiſhop of Milan at the firſt conſiſtory. The pope, upon this occaſion, was unuſually obſtinate: he ſent to the emperor no longer one of thoſe friendly and confidential letters, which had been ſo fruitleſs, and which Joſeph ridiculed among thoſe about him, made public ſome paſſages, and even cauſed others to be printed, but wrote a true brief, in which he ſpoke the antiquated language of the head of the church. He would have done much better in following the advice of Bernis and chevalier Azara. The letter was ſent back to him from Vienna, without a ſingle word of anſwer. He was in deſpair, when an event which he expected, but which he did not believe ſo near, occurred to conſole his vanity, and made ſome rays of hope gleam on his pontifical heart.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Emperor's Journey to Italy.

To an ardent mind, and a violent diſpoſition, Joſeph II. joined more goodneſs and juſtice than was generally ſuppoſed in Europe. Perſevering to obſtinacy in the plans which he had once adopted, he did not allow himſelf to be ſtopped by any of the little conſiderations that render ſo many of them abortive in others. He was not afraid of giving diſquietude to thoſe who might ſuffer from his meaſures; but he was not above beſtowing upon them ſuch unimportant conſolations as he thought compatible with his dignity. He had an inordinate deſire of celebrity. It was his wiſh that the attention of Europe might be conſtantly fixed upon him. He poſſeſſed an activity of body and mind which conſumed him, and accelerated his death. Two circumſtances made him fond of travelling: firſt, becauſe diſtruſtful of others, and having full confi-

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dence in himſelf, he did not imagine that he was maſter of any thing but what had come under his own eyes; and in the next place, he wiſhed to render himſelf the object of general admiration for his talents, which were at once both brilliant and ſolid, for his learning, which was extenſive, and for his external plainneſs, which pretty well concealed his pride. He had promiſed Pius VI. to return his viſit. He was not willing to ſacrifice any of his ideas; but he did not make the torments he cauſed him a matter of ſport. In ſhort, he wiſhed to evince that he was not more eaſily to be ſhaken, when in cloſe conference, than at a diſtance; not more in his philoſophical court than in the centre of ſuperſtitious Italy. He knew that his late reforms cauſed a great ſenſation at Rome, and were there talked of in a ſtyle ſomewhat like threats. He was deſirous of ſhewing that he knew how to brave ſtorms of every kind. His auſtere chancellor of ſtate, the prince of Kaunitz, firm, haughty, and inflexible, encouraged him in his perſeverance in reſpect to the Eccleſiaſtical See, and expreſſed himſelf, on the ſubject of the reſiſtance of the biſhop of Rome, with greater harſhneſs than even the emperor himſelf. He had ſaid very publicly, that if Pius VI. refuſed to preconiſe the archbiſhop of Milan, he would aſſemble the biſhops of Lombardy, and, according to the practice of the primitive church, would cauſe to be conferred by them the canonical inſtitution to ſuch individuals as the emperor had appointed: that if the court of Rome ſhould perſiſt in this refuſal, it would cauſe a rupture with that government. Such was the ſituation of the court of Vienna with reſpect to the Holy See in the month of December. The emperor's miniſter at Rome was cardinal Herzan, a well-meaning man, but weak and timid, and frightened at the taſk which had been aſſigned him. Unſteady and wavering, between his duty as a member of the Sacred College, and that impoſed upon him by his ſituation, he conſulted, heſitated, and trembled; when an incident, which happened altogether unexpectedly, occurred to relieve him, for a time at leaſt, of his embarraſſment.

The emperor left Vienna on the 6th of December, after having named prince Kaunitz director-general of all the current affairs, and announced to all the ambaſſadors at his court that he was going to ſet out upon a journey *which he conſidered as neceſſary*. The only circumſtance from which a probable conjecture could be formed as to the object of his

journey, was, that he carried with him ſeveral of the acts relative to his diſputes with the court of Rome. He took his route by Clagenfurt, where he ſpent ſeveral hours with the archduchefs Mary-Anne; croſſed the Tyrol, Mantua, and Bologna, and on the 18th arrived at Florence. The king of Sweden, who was then travelling under the name of count de Haga, happened to be at that city at the ſame time, and was about to proced to Rome. This having been communicated to Pius VI., he had ſent a courier to meet him. Joſeph, who had a ſtrong propenſity to things out of the common road, and was diſpoſed to play a trick upon Guſtavus, for whom he had no great regard, ſet out ſome hours before him, met the courier, paſſed himſelf for the count de Haga, and under that name entered Rome on the afternoon of the 23d December. He alighted at the houſe of his miniſter, who, in his extreme ſurpriſe, contemplated him as his deliverer, rather than as his ſovereign.

Joſeph had not been at Rome ſince 1769. Among the perſons he had there known, the chevalier Azara, who was then agent of the court of Spain, had particularly attracted his attention. He had conceived the moſt favourable opinion of his ſagacity, energetic character, and all the other qualities which he has ſince diſplayed. Without making himſelf known to any perſon, he wrote to the Spaniſh miniſter, requeſting a conference with him that very evening, and begging him to fix upon one of the theatres at Rome as a rendezvous. The chevalier Azara had boxes at every public place: he ſent the emperor all the keys of them, deſiring him to make his choice, and promiſing to viſit them all, one after another, till he found him. In the mean time, the emperor had himſelf conducted, by his miniſter, to the pope's apartments. The news of his arrival had not yet reached the Vatican, where that of the king of Sweden was only known, who every moment was expected to make his appearance. All of a ſudden the cardinal Pallavicini was informed that the emperor was arrived. The cardinal could hardly believe it: the pope was ſtruck with a ſurpriſe bordering upon terror. Every preparation was making to give him a proper reception; when Joſeph, in his uniform, appeared at the door of the holy father's cloſet.

Pius VI., although thunder-ſtruck at ſo abrupt a viſit, received him with every token of ſatisfaction. They held a pretty long, but vague conference, and afterwards went together

together to St. Peter's church. The pope offered the emperor a praying-deſk by the ſide of his own. Joſeph, who could affect ſimplicity to admiration, modeſtly declined that honour, and knelt a little behind the pontiff. They parted ſoon after. "This church," ſaid the emperor to the pope, "is not the proper place for compliments, permit me to go "and viſit your muſeum." The pope's two nephews accompanied him thither; but the appointment which he had made with the miniſter of Spain intereſted him much more. He quitted every thing to repair to the box he had choſen, where he was ſoon joined by the chevalier Azara. Joſeph II. was exceedingly vexed at this firſt converſation being interrupted by ſeveral intruders, eager to pay their court to him, and who were very coldly received. The king of Sweden was of the number, and was no better treated than the reſt. *Good night, count*, ſaid the emperor abruptly to him; and immediately after left the box, followed by the chevalier Azara, with whom he paid his reſpects to ſome Roman ladies that were preſent at the repreſentation, and haſtily returned the viſit he had received from the king of Sweden: impatient to eſcape from the unintereſting crowd, and to reſume the thread of his converſation with the Spaniſh miniſter, he hurried him into a retired place, where they paſſed ſome hours *tête-à-tête*.

It is ſince known, what the credulous Pius VI. was far from doubting, that in this conference Joſeph had unfolded, with great heat, a plan that was about to aſtoniſh all Europe. He intended no leſs than to break entirely with the court of Rome. Joſeph had foreſeen and combined every thing: he was ſure of the conſent and concurrence of thirty-ſix biſhops of his dominions. The *dogma*, the eccleſiaſtical hierarchy, were to remain untouched; but he was to withdraw his ſubjects from that pontifical ſupremacy, which was of no benefit to the eſſence of religion, and was only calculated to produce civil diſturbances, and, perhaps, to recall the fury of fanaticiſm. In his opinion the church was a branch of the ſtate, and it was the duty of a ſovereign to ſubject it to temporal laws, and hold its miniſters in the ſame dependence as other ſubjects. He could no longer acknowledge the authority of Rome; he laughed at her thunders, which had in former times overthrown the world, but which at preſent could only impoſe upon children and old women. The papiſts called him a ſchiſmatic, which gave him little

uneaſineſs.

uneaſineſs. The churches would be leſs rich, the prieſts more exemplary, the monks far leſs numerous; the benefit would be general; it would promote public tranquillity, morality, and even the cauſe of religion itſelf. Joſeph II., it is ſaid, never was more eloquent, more determined, or diſplayed more, than on this occaſion, the ſtrength of his genius and extent of his knowledge.

The chevalier Azara, who had liſtened with attention, and without interruption (for this was the manner of carrying on a converſation with Joſeph II.), at length obtained a hearing. He had no ſmall difficulty to make him feel the inconveniences of ſo precipitate a reſolution. It was not, ſaid he, yet indiſpenſable; the noiſe that it would make might produce diſagreeable conſequences even to the emperor himſelf. If he had no fears from the fanaticiſm of Rome, was not that which prevailed in a great part of his own dominions to be dreaded? The pope was obſtinate, becauſe he was ill-adviſed; but was it not poſſible to make him alter his opinion? Could the emperor not attain his ends at leſs expence? Was it not neceſſary to reſerve violent remedies for evils altogether incurable? &c. &c.

Theſe arguments, from a man whom the emperor eſteemed, and whoſe principles and intentions could not be ſuſpected, appeared to make a conſiderable impreſſion upon his mind. He broke off the conference with the moſt conciliatory diſpoſition. Few perſons were at that time acquainted with his ſentiments on his arrival at Rome. It appeared even that he did not diſcloſe them to cardinal de Bernis, for whom he had, in other reſpects, great affection and eſteem; but he could not explain himſelf to a prince of the church as freely as to a lay miniſter, who was neither likely to have the ſame intereſts nor the ſame prejudices. Except in this he treated the cardinal with the greateſt attention, and repoſed in him a confidence which the other might have conceived to be unlimited. "Were you not much ſurpriſed," ſaid he, "at "my unexpected arrival at Rome?"—"Undoubtedly," replied the cardinal.—"I did not wiſh the Romans to believe "that they could intimidate me, and that I was unable to "anſwer the arguments contained in a letter which the pope "lately wrote me, and which I ſent back to him becauſe it "was an improper one for me to receive, and was not at all "calculated to make me alter my reſolution; for I never "deviate from a plan which I have adopted upon mature "reflection.

" reflection. Another motive of my journey to Rome was " to return the long visit which the pope paid me at Vienna. " *I have a regard for the person of Pius VI.: he is a good kind* " *of man.* You would laugh if you could hear what passes " at our conferences: he often grows warm, and even " sometimes get angry; I let him go on his own way; while " I keep my temper, and adhere to my determination. I " know very well that he would now give me the indult " that he refused me for the nomination to the archbishopric " of Milan, and to all the consistorial benefices of Lom- " bardy; but I will not accept as a present a grant which " belongs to me by the right of sovereignty. I am not to " blame if my predecessors have been negligent or too " timid. I asked the pope for this indult out of respect, " and not as a favour. He refused it to me in consequence " of bad advice; and yet a similar indult for Corsica was " granted, without hesitation, to Lewis XV."

The cardinal endeavoured to pacify him, and to make him sensible that there was some difference between the present case and that which he quoted; that Pius VI. was perhaps excusable in persisting in the preservation of the rights of which he had found the Holy See in possession.—" My re- " solution is fixed," replied Joseph with warmth, " and I " should be sorry if the pope should compel me to certain " extremities." .... (He here stopped, the chevalier Aza- ra had heard him say more); then continuing the conver- sation: " At the bottom, I must repeat it, the pope is *a* " *very good kind of man*; he does not even want for sense; " but he is not aware that times are altered. I shall not " hurry myself; but still less will I recede."

During the six days that Joseph remained at Rome, he had several conferences of this sort, as well with the cardi- nal de Bernis as with the chevalier Azara. He had also one with the pope, which was very long and extremely animated. Each with warmth set forth what he called *his rights*. Pius VI. admitted that he had not been able to succeed in making him a convert; but Joseph had taken good care to flatter his vanity, at the same time that he was vexing his heart; and when they parted, the pope was more delighted than ever with the emperor. The great question between them, above all others, was the nomination to the archbishopric of Milan, and to all the consistorial benefices of Lombardy. Joseph had come to Rome perfectly deter- mined

mined not to receive the indult which he had choſen to aſk for, and which had been refuſed him: however, the ſolicitations of the miniſters of France and Spain ſtaggered his reſolution. "Well," ſaid he to them, when he was ready to ſet off for Naples, "I ſhall have no objection to "accept this indult, but on condition that it ſhall be ir-"revocable, and drawn up in ſuch a manner as to appear "that I have accepted it ſolely out of friendſhip for the "pope."

Joſeph ſet off for Naples on the 29th of December, leaving cardinal Herzan full authority to ſign an agreement, in which the pope ſhould give up to the emperor the nomination to the biſhoprics of Lombardy, *in conformity to the inherent right of ſovereignty.*

It may be truly ſaid that this journey of the emperor to Rome was much more advantageous to the Holy See, than that of Pius VI. had been to Vienna; and that it ſerved to prevent a rupture. Joſeph had arrived with the moſt hoſtile intentions. But the repreſentations of the cardinal de Bernis, and particularly thoſe of the chevalier Azara, whoſe prudence, while he appreciated the uſurpations of the court of Rome, dreaded the ſtorms which always accompany even the moſt deſirable changes; more deliberate reflections upon the conſequences of the overthrow, the ſignal of which he was about to give; perhaps, even ſome emotions of kindneſs for this old pontiff, who was not perſonally deſerving of ill-will, but had conſiderable claims to compaſſion, calmed this firſt effuſion of violence. Each of the two adverſaries diſplayed, in the battle they fought, a mixture of firmneſs and condeſcenſion; and each thought that he had come off with honour. Had they not been perſonally acquainted, a rupture would have been inevitable. However, there were ſome pretty warm diſputes between them, when the emperor, on his return from Naples, again paſſed ſeveral days at Rome. They contended about the form of this agreement, which had been almoſt entirely ſettled previous to their ſeparation. Joſeph himſelf drew up another. Pius VI. thinking that ſufficient attention was not paid to the honour of the Holy See, refuſed to accede to it. On this occaſion Joſeph could not repreſs his ill-humour, and pettiſhly putting up the rough draught of his compact: *What need have we of agreements,* ſaid he; *we are friends, and ſhall always be ſo; and each of us will do in his dominions whatever*

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he thinks proper. The pope had a moment's courage.—*Very well*, replied he, *if your majeſty has the archbiſhop of Milan conſecrated without the canonical inſtitution, all intercourſe with this prelate ſhall be broken off, and his church ſhall be treated like that of Utrecht.*—He was not aware of the danger he ran by puſhing the emperor home. Joſeph, however, appeared a little diſconcerted. He again found himſelf in the dilemma which the prudence of his counſellors had made him avoid. After a moment's reflection he took out his draught, corrected it, deſcanted upon it, and even diſputed with ſome warmth; and at length the two negotiators themſelves drew up in Latin the compact that was to terminate their quarrels. It was immediately fairly tranſcribed, copied, and interchanged. But theſe two illuſtrious perſonages, while encroaching upon the functions of their chancery, had ſuffered ſome ſchoolboys miſtakes to eſcape them in their Latin production. They agreed that it ſhould be corrected; and Joſeph received a copy on the 20th of January, the eve of his departure.

In the three conferences they held together, the pope had the prudence not to ſpeak to the emperor of the letter returned in ſo rude a manner; and Joſeph was pleaſed with his ſilence. He, however, embarraſſed him exceedingly, by converſing with him about one of his projects which he propoſed to carry into immediate execution. He wiſhed to have in his dominions ſeveral vicars-general; and in order to provide for their ſupport, he told the pope that he meant to appropriate to himſelf the tythes, and ſome other revenues that the neighbouring biſhops poſſeſſed in Auſtria. Pius VI. ventured to ſay to him with firmneſs: *they will refuſe to accede to this arrangement.—Very well*, replied the emperor, *I will find means to make them give me their conſent.* We ſhall ſee in the ſequel that he kept his word.

With the exception of theſe little ſtorms, the emperor and the pope were very well ſatisfied with each other. Pius VI., whoſe weakneſſes the emperor flattered with his uſual addreſs, took a pleaſure in relating the particulars of their converſations. By his own account, the emperor had ſhewn him the greateſt confidence, and had communicated to him the moſt important ſecrets reſpecting the principal cabinets and the anecdotes of the ſovereigns of Europe. It was impoſſible for any man to have a greater command of words, or more wit. *In a word*, added he, *the emperor*

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ſays what he pleaſes, but not always what he thinks. In matters that did not concern the prerogatives of the Holy See, the pope was upon the moſt familiar footing with him. One day, when Joſeph was ſpeaking to him about perſons that he had known belonging to the church, he began a pompous eulogium upon cardinal Buoncompagni, legate of Bologna, a man of merit, whom the pope, however, had never liked. He thought he could not better extol his uncommon capacity than by ſaying: *He is capable of governing an empire.* —*Well*, replied the pope, *take him then; I will give him to you.* Nevertheleſs, he was obliged, ſome time after, to take him for himſelf. Although this journey of the emperor had coſt Pius VI. ſome painful ſacrifices, and had made him anticipate others, after having been very much diſconcerted at his viſit, he appeared exceedingly pleaſed at it in the end. He was at a loſs how to make Rome ſufficiently agreeable *to his friend*, Joſeph II. He very ſeriouſly propoſed to him to come and ſee him again, in order to be preſent at a canoniſation. It is not ſaid that Joſeph ſeriouſly promiſed to return; but it is well known that he took occaſion, even at Rome, to amuſe himſelf with his invitation.

On his firſt journey to the capital of the Chriſtian world, he did not ſhew himſelf to ſo much advantage as in 1784. At both periods he diſplayed a perſevering diſpoſition, never loſing ſight of his object; by turns polite or auſtere, according to circumſtances; always popular, and perfectly acquainted with the genius of the modern Romans, to which he adapted his conduct. On his ſecond journey he appeared to follow this plan, but with ſtill more addreſs. Affecting a great ſimplicity of manners, he avoided ceremony, and ſhunned homage. But always flattering the caprices of the Romans, whoſe affection he courted, perhaps more through ambition than vanity, he frequented the aſſemblies, the public places, and even the churches. This latter attention, no doubt, appeared to him neceſſary, in order to do away the prejudices to which his quarrels with the pope had given birth. Pius VI. had the goodneſs to miſtake his motive. He did not perceive that theſe attempts to gain popularity concealed projects which, had Joſeph lived longer, might have become much more dangerous to the temporal authority of the court of Rome, than his reforms in eccleſiaſtical diſcipline were to the authority of the Holy See.

See. His endeavours among the Romans were ſo ſucceſsful, that more than once he heard iſſue from their groups that cry of enthuſiaſm at which a more diſtruſtful pontiff might have been alarmed: *Viva il* NOSTRO *imperatore!* Long live *our* emperor! During this journey he made, to pleaſe them, an effort which muſt have coſt him more than all the others, and which he had not made in 1769; he was generous, and even liberal. He viſited ſeveral monuments and public eſtabliſhments, and was not ſparing of his preſents. He diſtributed near thirty thouſand florins in the hoſpitals, and among the people. In ſhort, when he quitted Rome, on the 21ſt of January 1784, every body was ſatisfied with him, and nobody more ſo than the pope.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Emperor gives the Pope freſh Cauſe of Uneaſineſs.

PIUS VI., however, had not ſurmounted all the obſtacles which he was to experience from the court of Vienna. He had proviſionally ſettled his principal difference with the emperor, in a manner leſs mortifying than he had reaſon to hope. He was congratulating himſelf on this triumph, for which he thought he was chiefly indebted to his dexterity and to the friendſhip with which he had contrived to inſpire Joſeph. "I choſe," ſaid he, "to give up to him the nomination to the great benefices of Lombardy, of which "the Holy See was in the habit of diſpoſing; but at leaſt "the biſhops thus nominated will always have recourſe to "me in order to obtain their bulls." Even in the opinion of the moſt rational cardinals this tranſaction ſtill ſaved, in ſome degree, the honour of the court of Rome. But when the queſtion was to carry it into execution in regard to the archbiſhop of Milan, new difficulties occurred, which the wiſe conſidered puerile, and to which it is aſtoniſhing that Joſeph could have attached any importance. Four months were ſpent in ſettling the form in which the new prelate ſhould be announced to the conſiſtory. This was an indiſpenſable

penſable formality, according to the cuſtoms of the Holy See. But, how to comply with it without offending the emperor? At length it was agreed that the pope ſhould propoſe for the archiepiſcopal ſee of Milan monſignor Viſconti, *nominated* by the emperor, *by virtue of the amicable agreement made between his holineſs and that monarch;* and in this manner Pius VI. announced the nomination to the Sacred College. The remainder of the year 1784 paſſed without any ſerious altercation.

The following year was to the pope a new æra of difficulties on the part of Germany; but he himſelf was very imprudently the occaſion of ſome of them, by that rage for wiſhing to extend every where the branches of his power, and by his inclination to retrieve a part of his loſſes. He could not remain peaceably in poſſeſſion of the ground he had left, but aſpired to new conqueſts!

Without conſulting the emperor, without thinking of the eccleſiaſtical princes, he took a fancy to create a nunciature at the court of Munich, and conſequently a new rival to the ſpiritual authority of the prelates of Germany. Immediately the elector of Mayence, and the archbiſhop of Saltzbourg complained bitterly to the emperor of this attack made upon their dioceſan rights. The pope thus revived a very delicate queſtion, upon which Joſeph II. had explained himſelf in a moſt energetic manner. He anſwered the demands of the two archbiſhops, by ſaying, "that the nuncios were "to be no more than mere envoys of the pope as a temporal "ſovereign; but that he would never ſuffer them to exercise in the empire, or at his court, any juriſdiction in "eccleſiaſtical affairs." The cardinal Herzan, his miniſter at Rome, was charged to explain himſelf to that effect to the pope.

Pius VI. and his council were thunderſtruck at this declaration, which they ought to have expected. But they well knew that nothing was to be obtained of Joſeph II. by reſiſtance. The pope anſwered his miniſter in an ambiguous manner; that he could not give up the connexion which he had been deſirous of eſtabliſhing with the elector of Bavaria; but that he had conceived himſelf entitled to delegate to another the authority concerning which there had been no diſpute.

There was then at Rome a certain marquis Antici, a clever Italian, who, by dint of artifice and intrigue, had ſucceeded

ceeded in acquiring a ſort of conſequence. He was accredited from the electors of Bavaria and Cologne as envoy to the Holy See. He was deſirous of making a merit with the court of Munich, of procuring it a nuncio. This was a kind of relief for the catholic powers of the ſecond rank. How great was the embarraſſment of the prelate Antici, when one of his conſtituents, the elector of Cologne, as hoſtile as his brother the emperor to the prerogatives of the nunciature, enjoined him to oppoſe with all his might the innovation he had himſelf promoted! The pope, though very much vexed at the double diſappointment, could not refrain from laughing on ſeeing the double plenipotentiary obliged to act, at the ſame time, two parts ſo contradictory! For, as Joſeph II. ſaid, Pius VI. was, at bottom, *a good kind of man.* He was not ſuſceptible of any very great degree of feeling. Ill-humour, chagrin, affection, hatred, nothing in ſhort, made upon him a laſting impreſſion. His mind was very frequently agitated, but never deeply affected. Hence the numerous inconſiſtencies, and ſeveral of the calamities of his pontificate. Hence, to balance the account, that unalterable impaſſibility and that florid health which he has preſerved in the midſt of the moſt overwhelming difficulties.

In the month of October 1785, the nunciature experienced a mortal blow by an ordinance of the emperor, which deprived the nuncios in Germany of every kind of juriſdiction, and reſtored to the biſhops all their antient rights. The elector of Cologne, who, as archbiſhop, was perſonally intereſted in this ordinance, haſtened to publiſh it in his ſtates, to the great mortification of the Ex-jeſuits and all the advocates of the Holy See. The elector of Mayence, who had no nuncio at his court, but who dreaded the pretenſions of the new nuncio of Munich, took, in his ſtates, ſuch meaſures as were conformable to the views of the emperor, and dried up one of the ſources, to which the *dataria* was going to apply under various pretences. Henceforth no more diſpenſations, no more foreign juriſdiction were to be exerciſed in Germany. The Holy See ſaw itſelf ſucceſſively ſtripped of its abſurd prerogatives and of its ſcandalous revenues; and the catholic princes, great and little, without foreſeeing that, in other reſpects, they were acting contrary to their own intereſts, awoke the reaſon of the people, releaſed them from their ſacred chains, and prepar-

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ed their minds for thoſe changes which France has ſince operated with ſo much ſucceſs.

The elector of Bavaria was the only prince of the empire that ſtrove to oppoſe diſtinguiſhed marks of good-will to the affronts which the court of Rome received from all the other parts of Germany. He welcomed Zoglio, the new nuncio, with all the magnificence of his court; at the ſame time announcing to his ſubjects that henceforth they were to apply to that nuncio, as they had before done to thoſe of Vienna, Cologne, or Lucerne. But the four archbiſhops of Germany, thoſe of Mayence, Cologne, Treves, and Saltzbourg, uttered loud cries againſt this innovation, and their ordinances ſpoke the language of the emperor. Zealous partiſans of ſpiritual authority, they were equally ready to claim it for themſelves, and to contend for it with uſurpers. They therefore moſt poſitively forbade their dioceſans to apply, *under any pretence*, either to Zoglio the nuncio, or to Pacca the new nuncio, who had juſt ſucceeded Belliſoni at Cologne. The two nuncios durſt not reſiſt. They had recourſe to the pope, who had involved them in this dilemma, from which it was incumbent upon him to extricate them. Pius VI. at that time employed, as his principal ſecretary, the Ex-jeſuit Zaccaria, of whom we have already ſpoken more than once. He was a fanatic who poſſeſſed that ſort of talent, or at leaſt that kind of erudition which qualified him for ſuch a taſk. He immediately began to draw up a learned ſtatement, in which, had he been left to himſelf, he would have proved, in an *irrefragable* manner, no doubt, that in *all times* the Holy See had poſſeſſed *the right* of ſending, *at its pleaſure*, and *whereſoever it thought proper*, nuncios inveſted with full power, without any interference, on that account, on the part of the dioceſan biſhops and archbiſhops.

Notwithſtanding the rapidity of his eloquent pen, Zaccaria was anticipated by the four archbiſhops. They formed a congreſs at Ems, near Coblentz, and boldly deliberated on queſtions which the Holy See had till then conſidered as appertaining excluſively to its juriſdiction; ſuch as the precepts for faſting, the obſtacles to marriage, the organiſation of chapters, &c. The elector of Treves, more ſcrupulous than his colleagues, would have wiſhed not to perplex that pontiff, whom he had received at Augſbourg with ſo many marks of affection and reſpect: he therefore made a few

few difficulties, but at length ſubmitted. Several biſhops of Germany, and even ſome ſecular princes, in other reſpects rather devoted to the court of Rome, adopted the principles of the congreſs at Ems; and Pius VI., in theſe times already ſo difficult, promoted, or ſuffered blind adviſers to promote, a ſtorm which had an effect directly contrary to that he had ſo fully expected. Every one examined queſtions to which the public attention was called, and which, for political reaſons at leaſt, ſhould have been left undecided. People thus became familiariſed to a ſort of independence, which, a century before, would have appeared to border upon ſchiſm, or even upon ſacrilege. Thus the court of Rome ſeemed to call in the aſſiſtance of thoſe who were to undermine the unſtable foundations of its throne; and theſe eccleſiaſtical princes, encouraged in their boldneſs by the example and advice of a philoſophic emperor, accelerated that great criſis which was to overthrow this throne, and reach even themſelves. They could not have calculated better for the progreſs of reaſon, nor worſe for their own intereſts.

On this occaſion the court of Rome committed one imprudence after another. Inſtead of endeavouring to ſupport its pretenſions at a period when the intelligent were ſhocked at them, when even the devotees began to ſuſpect them to be bordering upon uſurpation, it ought to have confined itſelf, agreeably to the advice of Bernis and Azara, and that which would have been given by Benedict XIV., to the enjoyment of thoſe rights in which it was quietly left in poſſeſſion; but, like a deſperate gambler, it expoſed itſelf to total ruin, in order to retrieve a few trifling loſſes, or diſpute ſome litigious ground.

Will it be believed that, inſtead of yielding to this aſſemblage of reſiſtance, it wiſhed to employ tenacity, and even violence, as in thoſe times when the moſt abſurd pretenſions were authoriſed by the blind docility of nations? Unſkilful in the choice of its agents, it had ſeen the nuncio Zoglio irritate, by its claims, the archbiſhop of Saltzbourg, who was a Colloredo, ſon of the vice-chancellor, and who, conſequently, was more certain than any other perſon of the emperor's ſupport.

Its nuncio Pacca behaved with ſtill more effrontery. He bethought himſelf of publiſhing, in his nunciature, a manifeſto, addreſſed to all the prelates and vicars of the elec-

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torate of Cologne; and in which he *ordered them* not to acknowledge the diſpenſations for marriage, to certain degrees of conſanguinity, that had been granted *without the indult of the pope*. The elector of Cologne, brother of the emperor, repreſſed this inſolence, by *ordering*, in his turn, all thoſe to whom copies of the manifeſto had been addreſſed, by a *perſon calling himſelf a nuncio*, to ſend them back under the ſame cover, and to procure a certificate of their having done ſo from the different poſt-maſters. The elector of Mayence, being informed that the vicars of his archbiſhopric had alſo received the ſame orders from the nuncio, wrote to them, that he hoped they would hold in juſt abhorrence this impudent uſurpation, the *ſole object of which was to diſturb the peace of their conſciences*, and that they would ſend back to Cologne the manifeſtoes that had been tranſmitted to them by a *pretended nuncio*.

Even the chancery of the electorate of Treves could not but take offence at the boldneſs of the nuncio Pacca, and profeſſed with energy that evident principle, that no perſon, *however pompous might be the title with which he was inveſted*, could exerciſe a legiſlative power in a foreign archbiſhopric. Thus the pious elector of Treves himſelf profeſſed and propagated thoſe very principles which philoſophy afterwards employed with ſo much energy to deſtroy, at leaſt in France, all the fabric of ſuperſtition.

The nuncio Pacca did not ſuffer himſelf to be awed by ſo much oppoſition. In ſpite of the ſovereigns who would not acknowledge him, he continued to exerciſe the functions of nuncio, and endeavoured to excite fermentation in thoſe countries where he yet found many credulous and timid perſons. The archbiſhops of Germany addreſſed to the pope the moſt preſſing demands, the moſt energetic proteſts. They could obtain no anſwer. The marquis Antici, curſing more than once his double character, was obliged to preſent to the court of Rome thoſe acts ſo prejudicial to its authority; and, as it happens in ſimilar caſes, he was made reſponſible for their contents. The audiences he had were ſcenes of ill-humour and violent reproaches. His ambitious patience at length was worn out; and he renounced the title of plenipotentiary of an elector, whom he found it ſo difficult and ſo dangerous to repreſent.

The eccleſiaſtical electors perſiſted in their bold conduct in regard to the Holy See. The firſt among them in rank,

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the elector of Mayence, even went so far as to present to the emperor propositions which made the court of Rome tremble, and which, he asserted, were the expression of the wish of all the Germans. He therein said that those famous decretals of Isidorus, now universally allowed to be spurious, was the sole base on which rested the immunities of the court of Rome. He demanded the convocation of that new council, promised by it for upwards of two hundred years, and which was to exhaust the source of the riches it had usurped. Incessantly evading its promises, and frustrating the hope of the Germanic empire, it continued to violate the conditional compact that it had made with the princes of Germany; and the German people were therefore released from all their engagements towards it. The time was come for the Germans to make another use of all those sums which they sent to Rome for the pall of their archbishops, in order to devote them to the advancement of their own prosperity, and to the relief of the unfortunate, &c. A person might have thought himself on the eve of a new reformation. Three years after, the orators of the constituent assembly did not express themselves with more energy concerning the usurpations of the court of Rome. And it was an archbishop of Mayence who introduced this language! He did not suspect that he was thus preparing the public mind for that great concussion, which, by shaking Europe and the catholic religion, was, from enterprise to enterprise, to lead to the secularisation of a great part of his own states.

Such a doctrine could not but be pleasing to Joseph. But, not less bold, he was more prudent than those prelates who, after all, were pleading their own cause, rather than injuring the Holy See. Still following the route he had traced for himself, he proceeded with a firm, though not a hasty step. He favoured the wishes of the ecclesiastical princes, but thought it his duty to retard their completion. Perhaps he chose, at all events, to reserve to himself the honour of initiation, and rather chose to give, in his own dominions, examples to imitate, than concur, as chief of the empire, in a reform of which he would not have had all the merit.

He likewise signalised the year 1786 by measures which afflicted the court of Rome. The prelates had till then made an essential part of the states of Austria. He excluded them, and substituted commendatory abbés, who were entirely of his own choice. He secularised certain religious orders; that of the Camaldules, for instance, and suppressed

moſt of the convents of ſome others. He ſtripped the more opulent of their eſtates, and of their treaſures, both ſacred and profane. Their fineſt pictures were taken to add to the riches of his gallery. Such of their books as were deſerving of that honour, were placed in the famous library of Vienna: the reſt were abandoned to grocers, or ſerved to make cartridges. All their valuable furniture, whatever had been its uſe before, was ſold by public auction, and the ſums it produced were placed in the *bank of religion*. It was not an empty name that he had given to this bank, which was wholly devoted to the payment of penſions to the religious orders of both ſexes who no longer lived in communities, to the ſupport of ſeveral new biſhops and vicars, a great number of whom he eſtabliſhed, and to the maintenance of ſchools and pious foundations. Idleneſs, deprived of its means, muſt have grieved at theſe transformations, at which blind fanaticiſm muſt have been enraged, while they could not but be approved of by diſpaſſionate orthodoxy. But the Holy See, finding its ſatellites ſucceſſively impoveriſhed, and their number decreaſed, was deeply afflicted. No vain fear, no perſonal conſideration affected the emperor's reſolutions. He had made a regulation, that no biſhop of his dominions ſhould hold two conſiderable benefices at a time. The cardinal Migazzi, archbiſhop of Vienna, was alſo adminiſtrator of a rich biſhopric in Hungary. He was obliged to make his election. Having decided for the archbiſhopric of Vienna, he ſent to the pope the reſignation of his other benefice. Pius VI., who was ſilently ſuppreſſing ſo many chagrins, ſent back this inſtrument to the emperor, without accompanying it with any obſervation.

But ſhortly afterwards there occurred a circumſtance which awoke his impatience, and had nearly involved him in a very ſerious quarrel with Joſeph.

That emperor, ſtill perſevering in his claim to be the ſupreme adminiſtrator of the church in his dominions, had recently erected the biſhopric of Laybach, in Carniole, into an archbiſhopric, and nominated to it count Charles de Herberſtein. By virtue of the laſt agreement, concluded with reſpect to the archbiſhopric of Milan, it was neceſſary that the pope ſhould, in point of form, cenſure that nomination. He had the boldneſs to refuſe his concurrence; and what were the titles of the count de Herberſtein to the diſgrace of the holy father? Four years before, in a paſtoral exhortation, he had promulgated maxims which the court of Rome could not pardon. He had dared to ſay: *Every perſon is at liberty to chooſe the religion he likes beſt.* The pope required,

required, as a condition of count de Herberſtein obtaining his confirmation, that he ſhould retract theſe *pernicious maxims*. Joſeph and his prime-miniſter at firſt took great offence at this ſtrange pretenſion. The old prince de Kaunitz waited himſelf upon the nuncio Cayrara, and, in his uſual ſevere tone, ſaid: "The reſiſtance of the pope, upon this occaſion, would raiſe an inſurmountable barrier between the See of Rome and the dominions of his Imperial majeſty, and for ever put an end to the reſpect which the emperor hitherto had for the conſequence of the pope. Nothing could in future prevent him, of his own Imperial authority, from making every eccleſiaſtical arrangement, as was the uſage in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity."

The nuncio, terrified, immediately diſpatched a courier to Rome. Never had he ſo unpleaſant news to announce; and whether from want of addreſs on his part, or injuſtice on the part of the pope, on him was thrown all the blame. This was undoubtedly one of the cauſes of the prejudice which Pius VI. always had againſt him, and which he manifeſted till the day of his fall. The repreſentations of ſo diſagreeable an interpreter ſerved only to confirm him in his reſiſtance: he had, what was ſcarcely to be expected of him at that time, the courage to write to the emperor a letter, in which he declared the new archbiſhop a *heretic*, and proved, from ſeveral paſſages in his paſtoral diſcourſe, that he deſerved that title. Joſeph, who might have been irritated at this obſtinacy, manifeſted as much patience as his miniſter. He permitted the prelate to ſend to Rome explanations of the exceptionable paſſage, but with an injunction not to retract a ſingle word.

This ſort of reſpect ſerved only to render the pope more obſtinate. Under different pretences, he poſtponed the confirmation of the biſhop of Laybach; and before the end of the year death came and delivered him from this formidable adverſary. Thus was the diſpute terminated; but the year following the emperor made the pope and the Sacred College pay dear for this caſual triumph. Reſentment ſeemed to animate his zeal for reform.

He began by giving his unqualified approbation to the conduct of the four archbiſhops, and expreſſed a deſire that it might be adopted by the other prelates. About the ſame time there appeared at Vienna, undoubtedly with his conſent, a publication, inviting all the biſhops of Germany to make a common cauſe with the archbiſhops; and ſeveral of them, with the biſhop of Spires at their head, complained to the emperor that they were not ſummoned to the congreſs at

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Ems. Joſeph wiſhed to prevent the diviſion which might take place on this occaſion between the two claſſes of prelates; and, inſtead of replying to the long and lamentable repreſentations of Pius VI., reſpecting this war declared againſt the Holy See by all the ſuperior Germanic clergy, wrote to the biſhops, exhorting them to concur in the ſalutary plan which had been conceived by the archbiſhops; and the Aulic council paſſed a decree, dictated by the emperor, by which, in oppoſition to the proceedings of the nuncio Pacca, they annulled the inſolent circular letter which he had dared to diſtribute, and, blaming the condeſcenſion of the elector of Bavaria, ordered him not to ſuffer the nuncio Zoglio, who was received at his court, to exerciſe any juriſdiction in the ſtates of Juliers and Berg.

The court of Rome was very much affected by this combination, which it ſaw forming through all Germany, to attack prerogatives that preſcription at leaſt ought, in its opinion, to render inconteſtable, and which appeared to threaten it with mortifications ſtill more cruel. A national council might deprive it of its ſtill remaining rights. So many ſovereigns, ſo many individuals of all ranks, prelates, even intereſted in the ſupport of its authority, transforming themſelves into philoſophers! What was to become of religion in a conteſt with philoſophy!

It was not, however, from Germany that the court of Rome had then to dread all theſe calamities. The jealouſy, the rivality of powers, prevented that co-operation which might accelerate the overthrow of its authority, already ſo much weakened. The four archbiſhops perſiſted in their plan of independence and reform, and counteracted the two nuncios in all their attempts; but the biſhops, although nearly unanimous in their claims to a ſort of independence of their metropolitans, were very dilatory in entering into the meaſures of the latter. During theſe tranſactions the French revolution took place; that revolution ſo bold, ſo rapid in its execution; that revolution, in ſhort, which occaſioned a ſuſpenſion of ſo many projected enterpriſes, overturned the moſt ſolid plans, reconciled little animoſities, ſet aſide little rivalities, and, upon the aſpect of common danger, united minds moſt diſpoſed to diſcordance.

Joſeph II., however, purſued to the end of his reign his irreſiſtible inclination for reform. Publications, favourable to his maxims, were either compoſed by his command, or circulated with his permiſſion. He ordered that, at leaſt in ſome of his dominions, the ſacraments ſhould be celebrated in the vulgar tongue. He granted to the proteſtants

tants in Hungary a great extenſion of his edict of toleration. He allowed a calviniſtical church to be eſtabliſhed in the very city of Conſtance, which three centuries before had ſeen the unfortunate John Hus expiate in the flames his principles, the precurſors of the reformation ſo fatal to the court of Rome. But it was particularly in the Low Countries that his zeal was diſplayed, that he experienced active reſiſtance, and that he occaſioned *his friend* the pope the moſt bitter chagrin.

It is not our intention to trace here all the innovations which he wiſhed to introduce, with rather an inconſiderate ardour, in the Auſtrian Netherlands, ſtill leſs ripe than the hereditary dominions of Germany for philoſophical reforms, more diſpoſed to revolt, more difficult to repreſs. It will be ſufficient to mention that he there experienced oppoſition not only from the people and the clergy, but alſo from the ſtates of theſe countries, which yet retained a ſhadow of liberty againſt the invaſions of deſpotiſm. They were already prepared for diſaffection, by grievances purely political. They manifeſted it openly when the emperor would interfere with the confraternities, ſeminaries, proceſſions, pilgrimages; in a word, with every thing which they conſidered as *religion*. They found powerful ſupporters, or rather ardent imitators, in the higher clergy, and particularly in cardinal Frankenberg, archbiſhop of Malines. The pope had then for a nuncio at Bruſſels a ſignor Zondadari, a fanatical and impetuous man, who did not omit this opportunity of making a figure. He pleaded with warmth the cauſe of the court of Rome, which Joſeph had diſregarded in his innovations in matters of diſcipline. On theſe queſtions, rendered ſo delicate by the circumſtances of the moment, a diſcuſſion took place, in which Pius VI., not yet undeceived, hoped to triumph; for one of his pretenſions was to poſſeſs and diſplay the talents of a great theologian; talents conſidered very unimportant by Joſeph in ordinary times, but which could not but be odious to him when employed to counteract his views. Zondadari, however, hawked about and commented upon the learned memoirs of his infallible ſovereign, and encouraged the Brabanters in their reſiſtance.

Joſeph, being then ſubject to difficulties of more than one kind, took umbrage at the work, its author, and, above all, its commentator, and cauſed the nuncio Zondadari to be baniſhed from Bruſſels, with forms not very reſpectful to the repreſentative of the Holy See. Zondadari was obliged to retire to Liege, where he continued to carry on his intrigues

intrigues more ſecretly, but not with leſs ſucceſs. The troubles which the eſtabliſhment of the ſeminary of Louvain occaſioned in Brabant, furniſhed him with freſh opportunities of inflaming the minds of the people, by the intervention of their prieſts; impotent efforts which Joſeph deſpiſed. The vigour of his governor-general, comte Trautmanſdorf, and his own firmneſs, made him triumph over the nuncios, prelates, and all the fanatics with which the Low Countries were infeſted.

In Germany, in the courſe of the year 1788, the ſame perſeverance had the ſame reſult. The nuncios wiſhed to continue their conteſt with the four archbiſhops; but the latter were united by intereſt. They had gone too far to recede; and had it not been for the events of the following year, it would have been impoſſible to foreſee to what lengths they would have been carried by their oppoſition to the court of Rome. They ſaw themſelves powerfully ſupported by the emperor, who tranſmitted to the diet of Ratiſbon an Imperial decree, in which that court was very cavalierly treated. Joſeph there ſtated, without reſerve, that the violent manner in which the court of Rome and its nuncios had reſiſted his energetic admonitions, juſtified him in taking the moſt ſerious meaſures to render prevalent the inconteſtable principles which he profeſſed, after the example of his predeceſſors, and that, in conſequence, he invited the diet of the empire to deliberate upon this important ſubject.

This, however, was only a vain formality, which ought not to have greatly intimidated the Holy See. The pope, as well as the reſt of Europe, knew the ſlowneſs of the deliberations of the Germanic congreſs, and the impotence of its laws. But this meaſure was ſupported by writings, in juſtification of the conduct of the four archbiſhops who oppoſed the claim of the court of Rome; and even theſe prelates did not confine themſelves to a paper war and empty threats. They proved that they could diſpenſe with the pope's interference in matters which they conſidered within their juriſdiction. The elector of Treves, of his own authority, releaſed the monks from their vows. The elector of Cologne even permitted them to marry when they could offer good reaſons for ſuch a ſtep. The pope at this time claimed a right to tithes of lands newly cleared. He ventured to intruſt a ſecular prince with the collection of them in the electorate of Cologne. This prince had farmed them out to the ſubjects even of the elector. Such a bravado could not remain unpuniſhed. Theſe new farmers were immediately apprehended and put in priſon. From that moment

moment the collection of the tythes, and the pope's pretenſions, were entirely relinquiſhed.

In all this affair between the nuncios and the four archbiſhops (an affair which would ſcarcely be deſerving of a ſmall place in the general picture of modern hiſtory, did it not ſerve to prove, on the one hand, the incurable obſtinacy of the Italians, and, on the other, the tendency of the human mind towards all kinds of independence), Pius VI., as if led away by an evil genius that had conſpired againſt the remains of his authority, heaped faults upon faults, which he expiated only by diſappointments. Wrongs that were not more ſerious have ſince hurled him from his throne. And after that, let human prudence again predict *infallible* reſults, and from experience derive rules of conduct!

The quarrels of the nuncios, the troubles of the Low Countries, excited in a great meaſure by the Holy See, ſtill continued when Joſeph II. died. Had a real friendſhip ſubſiſted between him and Pius VI., as both of them boaſted, it muſt be admitted that in the one, as well as in the other, there was a great diſtinction to be made between the man and the ſovereign, and that, whatever either of the two conſidered as his duty, has frequently prevailed over his private opinion.

Pius VI. having attained the pontifical throne with principles which, for a pope, appeared to be moderate, has experienced the fate of all thoſe who long hold the reins of government. He became corrupted by the exerciſe of power. Flatterers had poiſoned his diſpoſition, and prepared him for the part that he has played in his latter years in a manner ſo odious to a portion of Europe, and ſo diſaſtrous to himſelf. His fanaticiſm increaſed in proportion to the progreſs of philoſophy, and led him to culpable imprudences, which rendered his fall as inevitable as it was merited.

However, about the end of the reign of Joſeph, either through condeſcenſion towards that prince, or that his conſcience reproached him with having concurred in inflaming the Low Countries for idle ſcholaſtic diſputes, Pius VI. had tried his aſcendancy over the ſuperior clergy of theſe provinces, in order to bring them back to ſubmiſſion. Joſeph II. did not reap the fruits of his good intentions, but was thankful for his efforts. At the beginning of 1790, his miniſter, cardinal Herzan, waited upon the pope. He came to conſult him relative to the means of remedying the diſturbances of the Low Countries, which were then carried to the greateſt exceſs. The cardinal found Pius VI. occupied in a fervent prayer, and bathed in tears. Was he lamenting

ing the evils of which he was the author, or thoſe of which he was threatened to be the victim; for this was a ſhort time after the publication of the decrees of the national aſſembly of France againſt the clergy? The pope reſumed a ſerene countenance on being informed of this mark of confidence of the emperor. We have more than once ſeen with what facility he paſſed from ſorrow to joy, and what powerful motives of conſolation he found in homages paid to his vanity! Flattered at ſeeing this obſtinate and imperious emperor once invoke his mediation, he inſtantly wrote to the biſhops of Belgium to preſs them to exert themſelves in recalling their untractable flocks to obedience. The anſwer of the prelates to the brief of the pope was diſpatched to Rome on the 8th of March 1790. It breathed a profound reſentment for all the attacks that the emperor had made upon the liberties of Belgium, and a firm determination not again to ſubmit to the yoke which the emperor had forced them to ſhake off; and the prelates, who called themſelves the interpreters of the ſentiments of the Belgic people, concluded their anſwer by requeſting the pope himſelf to eſpouſe their cauſe, in imitation of thoſe powers with which that people had already formed connexions. Thus, unfortunate in all his enterpriſes, Pius VI., who was not always diſinclined to do miſchief, was unable to provide a remedy. Joſeph II. had not the mortification of convincing himſelf of the impotence of his interceder, having died a few days before the departure of the letter of theſe Belgic biſhops.

His ſucceſſor, Leopold, ſeemed deſtined to reſtore to Belgium days of greater ſerenity; but it is well known that he did not long indulge that hope. No ſooner was he ſeated on the Imperial throne, than he alſo announced diſpoſitions more favourable to the clergy and the court of Rome. He even proved, by ſome acts, the ſincerity of his promiſes. He reſtored to ſeveral biſhops of the hereditary ſtates the revenues of which Joſeph had diſpoſſeſſed them; and he reeſtabliſhed ſeveral eccleſiaſtical inſtitutions which his brother had aboliſhed. What was then paſſing in France proved to him, but too late, that the authority of ſovereigns was connected with that of prieſts. But for this experience he would probably have carried upon the throne of Vienna that ſpirit of reform which he had diſplayed in Tuſcany, and which, during fifteen years, had greatly tormented the pontificate of Pius VI., as we are about to ſee in the ſecond part of this work.

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END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.